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# TWENTIETH-CENTURY RURAL SCHOOL

E. E. DAVIS

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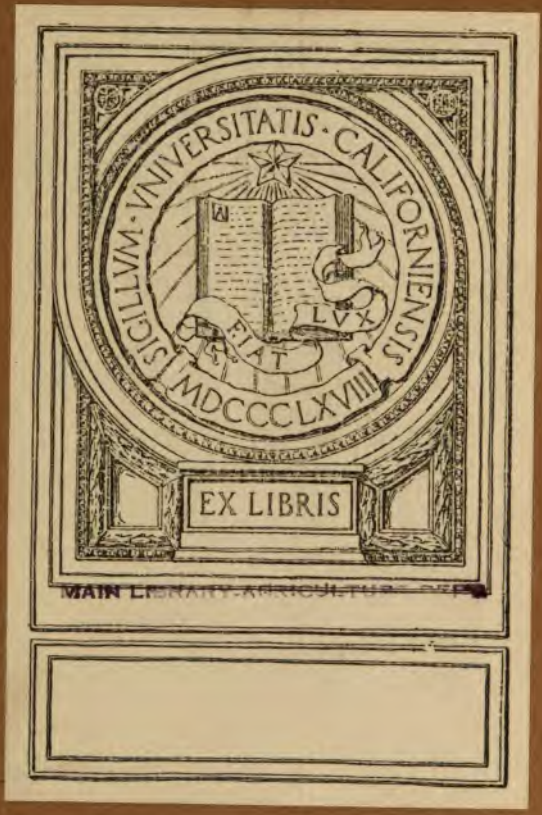
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# THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY RURAL SCHOOL

# The Twentieth-Century Rural School

*By*

E. E. DAVIS, M.A.

Rural Life Specialist, Department of Extension, University of Texas; Editor of the Rural School Department of the Texas School Journal

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# PREFACE

This little volume has been prepared for county school superintendents, members of county boards of education, progressive rural and village teachers, the rural-school sections of teachers' institutes, and for classes in rural education in the state normal schools. Its theme is the relation the rural school should bear to the life and interests of the community.

I am convinced that the free school of the future must hinge more on the community-service idea. The successful teacher in the centralized rural high school of the twentieth century must possess the combined abilities of "community manager," "social engineer" and educator. He must be the social and industrial light as well as the intellectual light of the people he serves.

Many teachers have left the profession in despair. But I am not ready to give up. I am firm in the belief that a new era is about to dawn. There is still a chance for men and women of ability and training who know how to make their ways among people

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successfully while engaged in the teaching profession. One of the richest opportunities for service and for attractive pay lies in our best rural and village communities. It is an opportunity overlooked by most of our educators. But few of our normal schools have ever seen it clearly. In the discussions that follow, I have tried to point the way to it.

I have endeavored to make this treatise as elementary and concrete as possible, taking most of the illustrations from rural and village schools I have taught and from things I have observed among schools taught by others. I have tried to prepare it from the view-point of the country teacher facing actual conditions at close range and not from the view-point of the college man interpreting rural data at long distance. I sincerely hope it will meet the need for which it is intended. E. E. D.

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# THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY RURAL SCHOOL

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

# The Twentieth-Century Rural School

## CHAPTER I

### Some Things of Concern to the Observant Teacher on First Arriving in the Community

1. **The Young Man Who Never Saw the Community Where He Was to Teach till the Morning School Began.**—Thirty noisy children were on the playground when the teacher came. Half as many were romping in the schoolhouse. The teacher, now of the faculty of a prominent university in the South, was young and unaccustomed to responsibility. He knew little about the affairs of life. He knew less about child psychology and school management. His untrained eyes could not see community needs with penetration and understanding. His equipment for the profession he was entering consisted of a brass hand bell, a box of crayon, and a license to practise teaching on a certificate of inferior grade.

At nine o'clock he rang his bell. It was the first time in his life he had ever rung a bell clothed with

all the authority of a pedagogue. He rang it most vigorously. The children came scrambling into the house. After they had had a few spirited scuffles for desirable seats, quiet ensued. Then all were curious to know what the teacher would do next. Just what that would be he himself was far from sure. His face was feverish with embarrassment and his nerves were quavering with uncertainty. Not knowing what else to do, he called a class. Two minutes later he dismissed it and called another. After a like period of time the second class was excused and a third one called. By recess he had heard all the classes in his school five times apiece. Then, for the first time, it came to his disturbed mind that a well-planned daily program would be necessary for the successful conduct of the school. And while the children played at recess, he arranged a schedule of classes for the remainder of the day. Thus he came face to face with his first difficulty in a path made rugged by his meager preparation and shortness of practical foresight.

Those were great days for that young teacher, but hard ones on the pupils. He was getting experience. They were being practised on. Both school and community were the victims of his incompetency that entire half-year. He could not

anticipate and fortify against the most obvious emergencies sure to arise in the course of his new duties. For instance, he engaged board in the home of a very unpopular man disliked by most of his neighbors. He permitted himself to be swayed by gossip and old prejudices brought over from family feuds of former years. He made every man and woman in the community his confidant. He was indiscreet in what he said and did. He inaugurated plays and games at school not at all in accord with the tastes and accepted proprieties of most of the people he had come to serve. He took issue with all who did not believe as he did, often antagonizing them to the point of enmity. He was a poor judge of children and grown people alike. He was a still poorer judge of community interests and needs, and was pitiably helpless in his impractical attempts to meet them.

This young man, uninformed and inexperienced, failed in most that he undertook that year. But his abominable failures were no more distressing than many made to-day by teachers of far greater academic culture than he. True, the academic attainments of teachers in the South are deplorably lacking in quality and degree. But more deplorable still is the fact that these meager academic standards are

about the only standards required. Personality, representative ability, aptitude for handling people, the gifts of civic and social adroitness, and ability to live, think and teach in terms of country life have been given but little weight in the certification of teachers. For that reason, I have deemed it expedient to set forth the examples of successes, failures, clever devices, unusual foresight and advanced educational practises enumerated in this little volume.

2. **Choosing a Boarding Place.**—A young lady once wrote her county superintendent thus: "As you know, I shall be principal of the school at Viola this year. Where is the best place for me to live? First, I would like to stay with the most influential family in school affairs. Second, I desire a comfortable room with good table board, and other things considered, I would like to be as near the schoolhouse as possible."

Whether a home with the most influential family in the community should be placed before a comfortable room and good table board near the school, is an open question. But this much is sure. Many teachers have come to failure by locating themselves with the wrong families, and many others have failed because of uncomfortable rooms

and poor food, while some have wrecked their health from exposure on long muddy roads to and from school.

Much depends on getting in the right family. Some families are of doubtful morals; some are gossip-mongers and mischief-makers; some are steeped in religious fanaticism; some are anarchistic; some are contemptuously snobbish; some have histories beclouded with whispered rumors of past misdeeds; some are misfits in the community; some are inexplainably unpopular. Unfortunate is the teacher who engages board in any of these homes. She makes herself a target for gossip, and throws wide a chasm of chilly aversion between herself and patrons from the very beginning. It is far better that she investigate her community carefully and critically before procuring a place to stay. If possible, she should do this before school opens. Where it is not possible to go in person, inquiries should be made through the county superintendent and other reliable people.

As a rule, it is unwise for a teacher to board with a trustee if as good accommodations can be had at some other place. For instance, a trustee in a small village boarded the seven teachers of the public school faculty. The teachers were charged

with pooling their influence with this trustee to dominate the policies of the school. The friction resulted in a complete change of teachers and trustees for the next year. Again, three teachers engaged board with a trustee. They found his home an undesirable place to stay and moved within the course of a few weeks. This incurred the ill will of him and his family. He retaliated by casting the deciding vote in the school-board meeting dismissing the janitor and requiring the teachers to do the sweeping.

3. **Getting Acquainted with the People.**— The spirit of friendliness and service is fundamentally essential to the teacher's success. No matter how sweet-spirited and philanthropic the teacher may be, she can not succeed and live apart from the world. Altruism requires action, and friendliness can not thrive without exercise. It takes motion to make them useful. Intimate acquaintance and abounding sympathy with those with whom the teacher is to live and labor are indispensable to her success. Teaching school is no business for a recluse.

Academic attainments unaccompanied by social adaptability are almost sure to make a poor teacher. Failure is imminent for the teacher who does not

know and understand her constituents. Intimate personal acquaintance should extend to all the children of school age and to the parents and young people not in school. This relationship should be established early in the school year. When possible, it should be done before the beginning of school.

The teacher with foresight and practical capacity seizes upon every opportunity for meeting and knowing her patrons. Post-office, drug-store, church, bazaar, farmer's club, school festival, and every other place where people come together find her there with that warmth of fellowship and kindliness of spirit that compel respect and admiration from all. Furthermore, if her heart is of the right sort, she actually enjoys meeting, knowing and understanding people from all walks and stations of life. She knows and understands the crude and the cultured, the blazé and the plain, the democrat and the snob, the poor and the rich, the poorly-clothed and the well-dressed, the modest and the bold, the underfed and the well-rationed, and all the rest that go to make up the great common tribe she has elected to serve.

But not all teachers meet people with the same degree of ease. Some have affable dispo-

sitions and magnetic personalities. They enjoy social contact. Their very attitude toward life compels friendliness. All who know them like them. Others are timid, shy, taciturn, and unacquainted with the ways of the world. They have neither the gift nor the acquired art of moving among people with ease and assurance. And still another group is unmindful of the value of warm social relationships and quite indifferent to the normal feelings and reactions of the many human souls about them.

But whether the teacher be timid, naturally stupid, or socially alert, the need for knowing patrons and being known by them remains the same. On that account some enterprising communities have established a very commendable custom of giving a neighborhood party in honor of the teachers just before the beginning of school each year. These parties are usually held at the schoolhouse, though sometimes they are held at the home of a trustee or at the home of some other family of good influence in the community. Where such social gatherings are not provided for by established practise the teacher should improvise some means of getting the people together just for acquaintance's sake. A Saturday picnic or a

Clean-Up-and-Beautification Day may be very appropriately employed for getting teachers and patrons to meet one another in the spirit of friendliness and cooperation.

4. **Identifying Gossips and Trouble-Makers.**— Your school district may not have a community gossip. But it most likely does. Most communities have such human nuisances. Some of them are harmless though ridiculously amusing. Others are provocative of mischief and trouble. And the narrower the community's interests, the wider and deeper is the stream of gossip that flows through it.

It is well enough for the teacher to know which persons are afflicted most seriously with the gossiper's habit. Such information may have the value of an insurance policy on the teacher's official life, for nothing can weaken one's influence more surely or end one's official life more abruptly and ignominiously than a fetid rumor in the half-confidential mouth of an inveterate tale-bearer. The prudent teacher will know the busybodies, have them under constant surveillance, retain their good will, and keep her own conduct most discreetly fortified against their idle tongues and damaging curiosity. This is the surest way of living among

them agreeably and getting along with them successfully.

Some women gossips are exceedingly dangerous and equally as difficult to deal with. There is no hate so deep or revenge so unmitigating as that of an ill-tempered woman. Among the qualifications of the persons who get along with her best are patient forbearance, friendliness for all, and apparent unconcern for household foibles, community feuds, and the telltale prattle of talkative people. But men gossips are much easier to handle. In fact, the management of a trouble-making man gossip is not difficult at all, if he is dealt with in private by one who knows how to be frank and keep cool.

For instance, a community had been in an unsettled condition for more than two years. Two teachers had abandoned the school in disgust. A young man of good personality, easy manners and calm nerves took charge at the beginning of the third year. He soon located the chief mischief-maker. It was no other than a man of considerable influence—a deacon in the church and a former member of the school board. He was on hand and made a short talk the morning school opened. He visited the school three times that week, two times

the next, and twice more the week following. On all these visits his one subject and theme of conversation was the community's past trouble. He was proud of his expert information in this field. He could recite family histories by the hour.

But on Friday afternoon of the third week of school, in the sunshine on the west side of the schoolhouse, while the children were on the playground at recess, the teacher reluctantly intimated that the unpleasantness of the two previous years was of little concern to him. Then his informant said: "Yes, but there are some of these people you will have to watch. They will bear watching. I have known them all these years."

"For sure," said the young man. "I am watching. It is my duty to watch. I would be an unworthy public servant if I did not watch. I am watching every pupil and every patron I have just as closely as I can. But do you know, Mr. Densmore, *I am watching you closer than all the rest of this community put together.* Now, you are a good man and I like you. I think you like me. And we are going to continue to like each other. It's our best friends who tell us of our worst faults. And I tell you kindly, *You talk too much.* I did not come here to contract for past grievances. I came here to teach

the school this year. And if you will just cease agitating old troubles, I think I can manage things here on the hill."

That school was taught to the last day and closed in peace. That was more than a dozen years ago. These two persons are still good friends and have been all the time. This incident that passed off tranquilly in private would have precipitated a bout or a brawl, making food for still more gossip, had it occurred in public. The public never did learn about it. The teacher did not tell it. Mr. Densmore could not afford to tell it.

On coming into a strange community, teachers are sometimes unconsciously swayed and biased by reports of the incorrigibility of certain pupils, the uncanny manners of this family, the extreme unpopularity of that one, and the like. For instance, a girl of fine ability and strong determination had helped her mother chastise her drunken father, had thrashed an impudent tramp with a garden rake, and had told a blushing young teacher that he should be dismissed for incompetency. She was the talk of the village. The teachers for the ensuing year heard of her and feared her long before they ever saw her. She was summarily expelled from school by the erratic young principal on

an unwarranted pretext at the end of the first week. She entered school elsewhere. Five years later she graduated from the college in a class with this very young principal who had inflicted upon her the injustice and disgrace of expulsion from the public school.

An unverified report can easily be parent to a false impression. Teachers are often swayed by groundless rumors. In this way wrong opinions concerning certain pupils, families and individuals quite commonly lead to subsequent injustices. Therein consists the greatest danger of rumor.

5. **The Religious Situation.**—Religious jealousy has not yet been refined out of the hearts of men. Interdenominational animosities still bring disgrace upon the sublime concept of the Christian brotherhood of mankind. Envious and suspicious intolerance still exists among Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, Lutherans and Campbellites in some benighted localities. The old-time proselyting and religious debating in public, once so productive of bitter dissension, have just about passed away. But recruiting agents are still active for every congregation, and the new school-teacher seldom escapes their inquiries and solicitations. Indeed, some preachers look upon the public school as a

fertile source for choir and Sunday-school talent and seek to influence the election of teachers with that end in view. For instance, last year I saw a man elected to the superintendency of the public schools in a town of five thousand population simply because his wife could sing in a certain church choir and the wives of the other seven applicants were not thus qualified. The pastor of that particular church controlled two votes on the school board. Just five months ago a new board declined to reelect that superintendent for the present year.

Church ambitions and religious dissensions often creep into the schools of our villages and small towns. They occur less commonly in the country, though the country is by no means free from them. Yet where they do make their appearance in the country, they are usually in their most violent form. The bitterest religious enmity I have ever witnessed has been in backward rural centers. Yet, all this does not mean that desertion of the church is essential to a teacher's success. Far from it, even in the most intolerant community. But it does mean with double emphasis that the successful teacher in a community rent with religious dissension must be tolerant, eternally vigilant, and have the bigness of character and those qualities of

resourcefulness and adroitness that enable one to stand out above petty squeamishness, avoid scriptural arguments, and keep aloof from church differences without giving offense to any one.

6. **Recreation in the Community.**—Recreation in many country districts is in a state of chaos. Social desires are ignored and unprovided for. The social instincts run riot like weeds in an untenanted meadow. In six contiguous communities in a prosperous farming district these were some of the answers as to how the people spent their Sundays: "Roaming over the country," "Visiting and loafing," "Wandering aimlessly about," "Sleeping and resting," "Dancing at the German Hall," "At church and Sunday-school."

Wholesome, well-unified recreational activities lessen the difficulties of school discipline. The attitude of the pupils in the school-room reflects to a very considerable degree what takes place during their hours of leisure after school and on holidays. The adept disciplinarian will be vigilantly cognizant of the values or the disadvantages of every social resort her pupils frequent and every recreational function they attend. Every community, no matter how dejected, has its social centers—pool hall, dance pavilion, barber-shop, country store, post-

office, cotton-gin, garage, drug-store, or street corner—where certain gangs and groups of its population congregate for gregarious pastime. And these resorts will not escape the eye of the teacher with keen vision for observing human conduct. They will be noted and correctly evaluated in the early weeks of school. If the teacher be a practical social-welfare worker—and every rural teacher and rural preacher should be—she will be deeply concerned with remedial measures for their improvement and correction.

A few years ago I was highly gratified with some observations in a village of six hundred people. The local pastor was a retired teacher, a man of good ability, and a natural leader of people. When he took the pastorate in this village, there were some boys' congregating centers that were breeders of idleness and baseness. He wished to combat them. He fortified the battlements of his church for that purpose, and a crusade of competition and peaceful conquest was begun against these recreational strongholds. One by one they fell. They could not withstand the wholesome competition of the new club rooms for boys and girls on the church property. And the membership of that church steadily increased from a few score to nearly five hundred.

Play and social inclinations are as natural as life itself. For the church to forbid its young people to engage in certain amusements without providing other and better recreations to take their places is a rebuke to the sanity of its membership and a self-inflicted blow at its own ultimate existence. Yet there are those in the ecclesiastical camps who would limit the functions of the church to things purely spiritual, just as there are those in the pedagogical ranks who would limit the entire work of the school to things intellectual and cultural. The cheap commercialized show, the vaudeville, and the questionable amusement park continue to flourish because the churches and the schools do not compete with them with cleaner and more profitable pastime. The amusement-seeking public accepts them because it has no other alternative, just as a man lost in the woods will alleviate his thirst with stagnant water rather than perish. Social hunger is almost as impelling as the craving for food.

7. **Taking Inventory of the Community's Finances.**—Before contracting for your school did you ask your trustees these questions: What is the local school tax rate? What is the total amount of taxable wealth in the district? How much available school revenue does it produce?

Finances constitute the bone, and desire for enlightenment makes up the muscle and nerve, of the school system. Without proper financial support the school must be left prone and helpless. The wide-awake teacher will look over a prospective location with the eyes of a business man. He will make an approximate inventory of the community's tangible assets—railroads, pipe-lines, sawmills, brick-yards, farms, dairies, etc.—and learn if the school taxes are regularly paid on all of them. He will know if the annual income measures up to the budget of a school such as he would care to teach. And he will not be blind to such artificially imposed conditions as farm tenancy and absentee land-lordism, so menacing to school finances in many of the wealthiest agricultural counties in the South.

I know a few teachers who are fifty years ahead of the times. They have seen the light of a new day. Some of them mean to make rural education their life-work. They will succeed in that capacity. But success will come easiest and surest to those who use the best judgment in choosing places to work. The most attractive of all communities is that one with a homogeneous, home-owning population, financially able and morally willing to support its free schools. These are the places that attract and hold the best teachers.

8. **Taking Inventory of the People.**—I know a community where the white population is composed of about equal numbers of Mexicans, Bohemians, Swedes, Germans and Americans. The human element in this community is all out of harmony with itself. The people are separated into small clannish groups by the barriers that the differences in race, language, custom and traditions have set up. Their ideals and interests in life constitute an ill-shaped, heterogeneous mass quite devoid of coherence and unity. It is poor soil for the seeds of public enterprise. School spirit seldom thrives in it. The biggest problem in a community of that sort is that of amalgamation and Americanization. The hope for its solution rests with the younger generation. Young men should be encouraged to accept places on the school board and take the lead in public affairs.

In taking inventory of the human assets in any school district the appraiser should be keenly watchful for evidences of special talent and the gift of natural leadership. He should identify a corps of potential lieutenants for assisting in the conduct of school and community activities. And, having successfully identified them, no time should be lost in pressing them into service according to their respective capacities: Boy Scout Master, baseball

captain and athletic coach, literary society president, secretary of the reading circle, dramatic club leader, music director, and the like.

The teacher has taken a long step toward success when he learns how to delegate responsibility successfully. There are plenty of capable laymen who are quite willing to help the teacher carry his burden of responsibility when properly encouraged to do so. The pastor of the village church, mentioned in a previous paragraph, is the school's most valuable human adjunct. There are those in other walks of life who are just as able as he, but their talents are lying dormant because no one has sought to stimulate them into activity.

In a certain rural district I know an unassuming nurseryman and gardener of no mean ability. He is one of the best informed practical horticulturists of my entire acquaintance. But the school did not discover him until recently. Now he meets the class in elementary agriculture once a week and contributes his time and talent most willingly. There are doctors, dairymen, poultry raisers and swine breeders all over the country who would cooperate with the school just as closely as this man does if the teachers would only find them and enlist their assistance in the right way.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Is it as essential that the teacher be in the community for a week before school begins as it is that she be on the school grounds for one-half hour before school opens each morning?

2. Give reasons why it is sometimes not best for a teacher to board in the home of a trustee.

3. Can a person without the gift of friendliness and social magnetism succeed as a country school-teacher? Can the qualities of friendliness and sociability be cultivated and acquired by one not possessing them as native gifts? Why should the teacher's acquaintance extend to all the people in the community? Why should the teacher know and understand people from the humblest to the most exalted stations of life? Some people with magnanimous hearts and deep sympathies have true affections for the whole of mankind. Others are apparently friendly and sympathetic, but at heart are altogether insincere. To which class do you belong? Are you really democratic, or do you merely pose as a democrat? Name some values that studying people at first hand and living sympathetically among them have over reading books about them.

4. Why is a community with narrow interests so likely to be contaminated with poisonous gossip? Why is gossip more intense in small towns than in large cities? It has been said that persons of education and culture are less given to gossip than the poorly informed, because small and worthless thoughts are crowded out of their minds with larger useful ones. To which of these classes do you belong?

5. Were you elected to your present position because you are a Baptist or a Methodist, or because you are a capable teacher? Is there social and religious harmony in your community?

6. Is there any form of organized social recreation for the young people where you are to teach this year? Where is the community's social center? Do the boys meet at barber-shops, pool halls, or other places for conversational intercourse and passive amusement? Do the young people go away to town for their amusement? If so, why?

7. Of what does the taxable property consist in the district where you are to teach this year: farms, live stock, railroads, pipe-lines, etc.? What is the total property value of the district? What per cent. of the people own their homes? What per cent. are tenants? Are there any absentee landlords? Are they active friends of public education?

8. What is the predominant nationality of the people in your school district? Do they all speak the English language? Are they socially homogeneous? Is there any one local interest—club, church or business organization—in which the majority of them take an active part?

## CHAPTER II

### Diagnosing the Case and Applying the Remedy

1. **Most Teachers Are Poor Diagnosticians.**—The doctor ascertains the nature of the patient's malady before prescribing a remedy. He feels the pulse, takes the temperature, notes the complexion and then decides upon the treatment. He treats each case according to its needs. The remedy for smallpox will not cure tonsilitis. The curative arts must fail in their usefulness when improperly applied. There are many doctors and teachers familiar with numerous valuable remedies they can not put into successful practise. They are failures in their professions because they can not make a correct diagnosis.

Rural and village teachers are especially weak in the art of diagnosing community affairs. It is a thing they have never been taught to do. Until quite recently our normal schools and colleges have never taken the question of community leadership very seriously. Even now, rural-life courses are by no means receiving the support they should.

Too many teachers gaze upon community problems and never see them. They can not interpret

the social data spread out before their eyes. The four walls of the school-room mark the limits of their vision. Indeed, it did not dawn upon the present writer for five long years after he had taught his first country school that he had overlooked two very definite community problems that he should have seen and have solved. He failed to diagnose the case committed to his care. Worse still, he did not even discover that the patient was sick.

The diagnosis of a case of measles is no difficult matter. The symptoms are easy to detect. The examination is purely physical. But the case of a sick community is much more complex. It is both physical and psychical. The traditions, language, feelings and sensibilities of the people must be taken into account along with the community's physical needs. I sometimes think that there are no people on earth so sensitive as country people. And as a rule, the farther removed they are from the centers of culture, the more sensitive you find them. Yet, when properly understood and properly approached, there are no people more responsive to capable leadership than country people.

Just here I wish to cite some instances where rural teachers have shown marked ability as community leaders:

2. **How a Four-Teacher School Got a Library of Six Hundred Volumes.**—Five years ago a young man with a commanding personality, an abundance of common sense and a twentieth-century conception of the function of a free school in a country district was employed as principal of a rural school. Three women teachers were employed to assist him. School opened on the first Monday in October, and the first three weeks passed quietly. On the third Friday afternoon the four teachers remained after school for a faculty conference. The social status of the community and the needs of the school were discussed at length. A program of school improvement for the year was decided upon. A new library for the school was included in this program.

But the program of improvement decided upon in this small faculty meeting was not given housetop publicity. Sometimes publicity is a great stimulus to community action and a legitimate instrument for the teacher to use in promoting educational enthusiasm. But in other instances it will defeat the very ends it is intended to promote. In this particular instance, the teachers thought best to conduct the campaign quietly and diplomatically. So they very tactfully set about educating their pupils and patrons to want better things in the way

of school equipment. But the new library was not mentioned, neither were the playground apparatus and the equipment for the laboratories.

The next week the pupils in school were required to write their parents urgent invitations to come to the schoolhouse the following Friday night. Just why they should be invited to the schoolhouse at that time was kept in mystery. The very mystery of the scheme caused the people to come. More than three hundred people were present. The teachers had quietly and secretly prepared for their reception and entertainment. The children below twelve years of age were received by one of the women teachers and the secretary of the mothers' club. The children from twelve to sixteen years old were entertained by a committee appointed for that purpose. The grown young people of the school and community were the guests of the principal of the school. The parents were provided for by the local pastor and the county farm demonstrator.

After more than an hour of merriment, instruction and entertainment, these sectional meetings adjourned and all the people came together in the auditorium. Some light refreshments were served and all had an informal good time together for another hour. Then the meeting was adjourned

and the people went home. But that was not all. The after effects still lingered in their nerves. Deep down in its heart that community felt better at the close of this meeting than it had ever felt in its previous history. That was the first step toward the new library and improved playground.

The meeting had the desired effect. A week later the community was asking that it be repeated. A second meeting was held two weeks from the time of the first one. But the program of school improvement that the teachers had in mind was not mentioned on either occasion.

A third meeting was held. At the third meeting, in the young peoples' section, the seeds were sown that ultimately germinated and matured into the library. It was done in this manner: At the proper time the principal said, "How many present would like to meet here regularly on the second and the fourth Friday nights of each month in the capacity of a young people's reading circle?" The suggestion was readily accepted by all. Then he assigned Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" for the first reading lesson. He told me that he assigned "Locksley Hall" because he did not think there was a single copy of Tennyson's poems in the community.

It was further agreed in a most cheerful manner

that all who failed to read the assignment by the time of the next meeting should be assessed a fine of one dollar to be paid into the treasury of the society for the purchase of new books. Much to the surprise of the principal, two copies of Tennyson's poems were found in the community. But when the time for the meeting came, twenty-three of the twenty-nine young people present had not read the assignment. Twenty-three dollars were promptly and cheerfully contributed in penalties, and that amount was supplemented by a general contribution of twelve more dollars, making a total of thirty-five dollars. The following week the club was presented with a complete set of O. Henry's books, and three months later the campaign was formally launched for a fund to provide a library to meet the needs of that school and community.

The incidents leading up to the final consummation of this library plan are too numerous to relate. I shall mention only one of them.

The principal said: "The greatest obstacle in the path leading to the installation of the library was our mothers' club. The mothers' club, though a useful and an almost indispensable organization in a school community, sometimes becomes a clog in the machinery of school affairs if it is not managed very

carefully. But don't you know, it is the easiest thing in the world to manage if you go at it in the right way. I handle my mothers' club just as I handle a bad boy. Assign the mothers some definite piece of work to do, and you have the difficulty solved. So I knew the mothers would want to assist in procuring the library. But I thought my teachers and I could install a better library for this school and community without their assistance than with it. So, while we were quietly, patiently and tactfully educating these young people to want more books and better books to read, the mothers were doing something else. They were kept busy installing the seesaws, swings, giant strides, hurdles and tennis courts you see on our playgrounds."

3. **How Five Small School Districts Were Consolidated Into One Large District.**—Three years ago a young man, just out of college, contracted to teach a two-teacher school in the extreme south end of a certain Texas county. A natural geographic unit in that part of the county was divided into five small school districts. In a private interview with the county superintendent three weeks after school began this young man proposed a plan for the consolidation of these five districts. "It will never do; it is impossible; those people are

all cross with one another; the very attempt will mean your undoing," said the superintendent. But the young man was persistent in his belief that the idea was feasible and practicable, and he had perfect confidence in his ability to see it through to a successful finish. He said: "Just turn the whole thing over to me. I think I can handle it." He was anxious for the responsibility, and the county superintendent, who was equally well pleased to be relieved of it, gave his consent.

The first thing the young principal did was to make a complete inventory of everything in the locality: the people who owned their homes; those who were tenents; those who had telephones and rural free delivery of mail; the number of horses, mules, hogs, sheep and cattle in the community; the status of the churches and the condition of the country roads; the chief social interests of the young people; and a great many other things. In truth, he soon knew more about the community than any other man residing in it. He became thoroughly familiar with the industrial, social, religious and educational standards of the people with whom he had cast his lot as teacher and community-builder.

Among other things, he discovered a group of young men who liked to sing. He also liked to

sing. For three years he was a member of a small college glee club before coming to that place. One evening he invited seven of these boys to come over and be his guests after supper. For more than two hours they stood in a group around the piano and sang. They learned a number of simple old college songs that were perfectly new in that community. From that time on they met regularly and practised singing two nights each week. In the course of three months of intensive training this teacher had evolved the best male quartette ever heard in that part of the country. They were singing regularly for the two churches and had given one concert at the schoolhouse that was well received by all the people. In short, the teacher had won the confidence of the school patrons and the unanimous support of the young people he sought to lead.

His next endeavor was to do some local extension work. A concert was given at the schoolhouse in an adjacent district one Friday night. The same program was rendered at the other three of the five schools in question on each of the three following Friday nights. The boys were improving in their singing all the while, and they were giving the best program that many of those people had ever heard. It proved so popular that the people asked that

it be repeated. It was repeated. All this covered a period of nine successive Friday nights. But it was worth the time and effort. It was part of the deep-seated scheme and program of educational propaganda that this ingenious young man had conceived for uniting the people and consolidating these five small schools into one larger and more efficient educational unit.

He then went to the county-seat town and confided his plan to the pastor of the Methodist church. This pastor was a very fluent speaker, a delightful entertainer, and had spent several years of his life as the superintendent of schools in a town of four thousand population. He agreed to come out on five successive Friday nights in regular lyceum fashion and give five lectures at these five schoolhouses. The five lectures were delivered and highly appreciated by all who heard them. The central theme was the Twentieth-Century Rural School. But the idea of consolidating the schools in that locality was most assiduously avoided at all these meetings.

After this lecture program, extending over five weeks, the teacher procured a stereopticon and a set of fifty-two rural-school slides. Then he went before these people again and in a visual way showed

them some of the bigger, better, more modern things in rural education. Improved playgrounds, modern buildings, social centers, libraries, laboratories for rural schools, and the conveyance of pupils at public expense were some of the subjects brought to their attention.

At the end of nine months of tactful, judicious education, these people were demanding for themselves the very things this young teacher had in mind when he went among them. They were desirous of a school with a greater aggregation of pupils, more teachers, and better equipment. To all effects, the vast majority of them were asking for consolidation, though consolidation as such had not been broached to them one time.

This young teacher knew how to reckon with practical affairs. He knew how to estimate the ideals and temperament of his constituents and how to apply remedial measures to his community's needs. He was something more than a pedantic, academic instructor in the class-room. He was a fisher of men and a leader of people.

4. **Great Leadership in a One-Teacher School.** —One Tuesday afternoon, slightly more than two years ago, in a one-teacher school, fourteen miles from the railroad, I heard Alma Gluck sing and

Woodrow Wilson talk to more than twenty country children below the eighth grade. Fritz Kreisler was there with his violin, and Victor Herbert gave a concert. The Victrola had brought the popular artists of the world together to delight and instruct those children. It was giving them a taste for higher culture and many of the best things in life.

The Victrola, library, physiology charts, primary reading charts, a cabinet of maps, some attractive school-room pictures, and a museum constituted the interior equipment of this magnificent little school. It was indeed a worthy home and a most amiable school center for the fortunate children in attendance.

The agent responsible for this delightful school was a little blonde girl weighing about one hundred and ten pounds in the person of the teacher. All this equipment had been provided and the school tax raised from zero to fifty cents on the one hundred dollars during her three years of residence with those people. Each step in the making of that school has an interesting history. The stories of the Victrola and the tax election are especially illuminating. The account of the tax election runs about as follows:

The largest property holder in the district had

always been opposed to a school tax. He had fought and defeated two local tax campaigns in the district during the years gone by. On numerous occasions he had threatened to make his tenants move and to raise the rent on them if they voted for a school tax. In short, the one almost insurmountable hindrance in the school's pathway was this man. He had denied almost two generations of children in that district the rights of a standard free-school education. He was cold-blooded, uncompromising, and overbearing. Most of his neighbors disliked him and feared him.

The teacher spent the first year of her tenure in that community studying this man. She spent the second year cultivating his acquaintance, getting into his confidence and exploiting his weak points. By the third year she knew him far better than he knew himself. She had made herself his mistress, though he was quite unaware of it. He would take orders from her and obey them like a school child. He never offered her one word of protest.

He volunteered to purchase ten new Victrola records for the school if the teacher would select them. He sent two teams that worked all day when the school grounds were being leveled. He helped repaint the schoolhouse. On one occasion he took

the teacher and the pupils in his two cars for an all-day picnic. He often called at the school to see what was needed. In two years he had unconsciously become a good school patron. At the solicitation of the teacher he had permitted his name to be placed on the ticket for school trustee. He was elected and made chairman of the school board.

The time had come to launch the school-tax campaign. The teacher had procured the necessary legal forms for the petition for the election. Everything was ready. The spirit of the community was fine. All the patrons were giving the school the full support of their moral influence. It was evident that the election would be easy to carry if the arch-enemy of school taxes did rise up in his wrath and smite it.

Up to this time the school-tax campaign was secret to all but the teacher. For several days the children had been making banners. They knew that an educational parade of some sort was being planned. But they had no conception of its nature or what it portended for the future.

On Saturday morning five automobiles were decorated in gala attire with banners, bunting, streamers and placards. With about thirty hilarious school children and young people, a round of

the community was begun at ten o'clock. They characterized themselves as "educational boosters." The teacher and the three trustees were in the car leading the pageant. Six other cars were in line with the five decorated ones.

The first stop was at the little village center of the community consisting of a general merchandise store, a drug-store and a blacksmith shop. Standing on the high porch in front of the drug-store, the teacher talked for ten minutes to the people assembled. She laid particular stress on the financial needs of the school. Then she presented the petition for the tax election. She procured nine signatures from the laymen present. Then she presented it to the three members of the school board for them to sign on the three blank spaces reserved for them at the top of the list. Without hesitation or objection they promptly added their three signatures to the list already signed. In a few more hours twenty signatures, the number necessary to call the election, were procured. Before night the county judge was consulted, the election ordered and the election notices were officially posted on the schoolhouse door. When the election day came, there was not a dissenting vote cast against the tax.

This teacher had won a victory. She had silenced

the most formidable redoubt threatening public education in that community without having to assault it. She had vanquished an enemy without having to conquer or defeat him. She had taken him alive and led him into captivity, and he was satisfied with his lot. Shrewdness and diplomacy were her conquering weapons.

Molding the attitude of an individual is very much like molding public sentiment in a community. Some dominant interest must be hit upon as a point of departure to work out from to other things. This man was a great lover of music. When the teacher installed the Victrola and some high-class records in the school, she enlisted one of his most available interests. She was quick to exploit the advantage thus gained. Her desire was for an unconscious expansion of his interests to other things. This she accomplished. In two years his most obstinate protests against the school were changed to words and deeds of support.

5. **The Supreme Test of a Community Leader.** —It takes an artist in human affairs to know how to identify and attack rural community problems successfully. With the problem unmistakably identified, the next question is the method of approach to its solution. Herein lies the supreme

test of the teacher as a practical leader of people. For every problem there are numerous methods of attack. There is the first best method, the second best method, and the fortieth best method. Some teachers possess the shrewdness and keenness of insight to detect the very best and the most practical of all the avenues of approach to each problem that arises. Other teachers fail because they begin at the wrong place, in the wrong way, and at the inopportune time. They err in their diagnosis and use poor judgment in the methods of administering the treatment they undertake.

The young man who installed the library, previously mentioned, possessed the genius of true leadership. He knew how to begin and where to begin a practical campaign for community uplift. I have thought over the case of that community many times. Of all the positions from which he might have launched his campaign for more books and healthy reading habits, I can not think of one half so strategic and appropriate as the one he chose. At that particular time and place the minds of that receptive body of young people constituted the logical point of departure. He saw it and made use of the opportunity. He detected a community need and met it in a simple, practical way.

We need more teachers who are capable of being men and women among other men and women. Too few of our present generation of teachers know how to make their ways successfully into the ranks of people. They break down at the point of social contact. They lack social aggressiveness. For that reason, they do not have a competent understanding of grown people. Such knowledge is not acquired through the dogmas, formulæ and academic tests of the teaching profession. Teachers with only academic training can never be successful leaders of people and constructive directors of group activities.

The men and women of the hour in the teaching profession must have a practical knowledge of people. They must also be capable of seeing community problems and handling them. I trust that the three instances of leadership cited in this chapter may cause other teachers to look more searchingly into the tasks and opportunities set before them.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. The doctor always diagnoses the patient's case very carefully before issuing a prescription. Why should the teacher follow the same practise in meeting the practical difficulties of school administration?

Which is the more difficult patient to diagnose, a sick person or a sick community? What are the most serious ailments affecting the community where you are to teach this year? Are you trying to correct any of them?

2. Suggest three methods of initiating a library campaign similar to the one mentioned in this chapter. Have you ever known of a teacher's failing to get a school tax voted, or to put new books in the library, or to buy a Victrola or other school equipment, simply because she did not start right?

A teacher once said, "I enlisted the assistance of my mothers' club in raising money for the library, but I did not invite it to help select the books after the money was raised." Did he act wisely? Does your mothers' club interfere with the internal affairs of your school? If so, whose fault is it? Would this interference have been averted if you had directed its interests to the allied activities of the school such as playgrounds, pictures for the school-rooms, sanitary drinking fountains, etc.? Do questions of discipline, class management, and methods of instruction fall within the province of the mothers' club?

3. Suggest three other ways by which the campaign for consolidating the five school districts mentioned in this chapter might have been successfully inaugurated. Would this consolidation have been possible without the seven months of skilful education this young man gave the people in those five districts? Will people have better schools when they want better schools and know what better schools look like?

4. Do you have an obstinate patron opposed to

school taxes? What are some of the things that interest him most? Could he be converted by some method similar to the one employed by the young woman teacher mentioned in this chapter?

## CHAPTER III

### Getting the School before the People

The commercial world knows the value of advertising and knows equally well how to advertise. The psychology of advertising has become a fine art. A practical advertisement attracts attention, holds attention, and creates a desire for the thing advertised. To attract attention it must be displayed in a public place. The bill-board and the electric sign are never put in the back alley. To hold attention and fix itself permanently in memory, the advertisement must be made impressive and repeated as often as possible. To create a desire in the mind of the customer or patron, the thing advertised must be shown to have the power of satisfying some physical, social or cultural want.

Educators, as a rule, are not practical publicity agents. The art of school advertising has not been studied very seriously by most of them. It is a subtle and difficult art requiring much more skill than the displaying of things to eat and wear. Blatant educational advertising would cause adverse criticism and defeat its very purpose. The dignity of the school must be preserved at all times. Yet,

publicity of the right sort is as legitimate for the school, library and playground as for the corner grocery store. The teacher should vitalize the school and let the people know there is a school in the community. There are many devices by which this can be done.

The following are some of the devices I have seen put to practical use in calling public attention to the school and in popularizing the school with the pupils and patrons. I trust that they may be of use to other teachers.

1. **Painting the Old Belfry.**—Twelve years ago, in the Western Cross-Timbers of Texas, the value of local school publicity was accidentally brought home to a young teacher in the following spectacular way. The belfry on top of the old stone building where three teachers were to have charge during the ensuing year was in a bad state of repair. The principal came to the community a week before school opened. He could not endure the thought of having to look at the painfully dilapidated old belfry every day during the entire session of eight months. On Thursday morning of that week he repaired and painted it. On Friday afternoon he gave it a second coat of white paint. On Saturday morning he went with the local doctor as he made his calls

in the community and discovered that the newly painted belfry on the old schoolhouse on the hill could be distinctly seen in every direction for a radius of five miles. It stood out white and conspicuous in the autumn sun. It had attracted attention and occasioned inquiry from most of the residents in the district.

At church on Sunday morning, before services began and while the people were assembling, the pastor, a friend and former acquaintance of the new teacher, grasped his hand and said: "Allow me to congratulate you, young man. You are an artist, a psychologist and a diplomat. You are a good advertiser. You have hung your sign up good and high, and all the people in the community know the new teacher has come."

The young man falteringly acknowledged the compliment with a stammering "Thank you." Until that moment the thought of public display had not occurred to him. But he got the cue to a new idea that he has acted upon to great advantage many times since. It is this. In education, as in business, *it pays to advertise.* And experience has since taught him that the more remote the district and the narrower the interests of its people, the simpler are the methods that may be used.

2. **A Beautiful Playground.**—In an East-Texas village of less than five hundred population there is a beautiful school playground. The lawn is large and looks like the lawn in front of a well-kept city home. This playground is the one outstanding attraction of the community. All the play apparatus is painted white and stands out in ornamental relief against the green landscape. The ground is encircled by a race course twenty feet wide and more than half a mile in circumference. This playground is put to intensive use during the school months and is by no means idle during vacation. It is a veritable joy-spot in the life of the community.

When I last visited that place, the swings and see-saws had just been painted white. There was also a long line of white hurdles, and the basketball goal posts were whitewashed to the tops. I asked the principal why he had painted all his playground equipment white. His answer was, "So people can see it."

This man had designed his playground to attract and compel the attention of every passer-by. Every piece of equipment was displayed to the very best advantage. The hurdles, swings and giant strides were given conspicuous places, and the tennis courts had been moved from the back side of the campus

over next to the public road, where they could be seen to better advantage by the passing public.

School spirit in that community is all that could be desired. The educational *esprit de corps* among the pupils, patrons and laymen could not be better. The biggest thing in the community is the school. The eyes of all the people are on it. The playground is only one of the many devices that have been used in keeping this school before the people and giving it popularity. The principal knows how to advertise the cause of education in a practical way. He knows the kind of advertising to use in that particular community.

3. **A Babcock Milk Tester.**—A few years ago a North-Texas county superintendent took me to what he said was the best-regulated and best-taught school under his supervision. On our arrival at the schoolhouse that morning the unusually large percentage of grown young people in attendance immediately told me there were things out of the ordinary happening at that school. The distinguishing feature of this school was the close articulation of its work in the higher grades with the interests of the homes and the farms in the community.

In a small laboratory that had been improvised,

for the most part by the teacher and the boys, a fifteen-year-old boy was working with a Babcock milk tester. He said to the county superintendent: "The seniors tested part of the cows before Christmas, and the ninth grade is testing the rest of them now. They found several boarders before Christmas, and we found another one yesterday. You know, a boarder cow is one that does not produce enough butter-fat to pay for the feed she eats. She just boards around with the rest of the cows."

The Babcock tester was only one of the agencies this school had adopted for making itself a dynamic force for good to every home and every farm in that school district. This was a school conducted in simple terms of usefulness that all could see and understand. The people felt that it was their servant and the community's best friend, and they stood ready to support and defend it at all times.

4. **The Farm Terracing Level.**—A farm terracing level costs about fifteen dollars. This instrument is beginning to win popularity as a piece of rural-school laboratory equipment. Thousands of farms are being washed away and damaged by heavy rains. Scientific terracing is the only remedy that will save them. Therein lies a great opportunity for the alert teacher ready to come to

the economic rescue of his school patrons. It is not only an opportunity for meritorious service, but it is an invaluable opportunity for establishing a sympathetic connection between the school and many indifferent patrons otherwise difficult to reach. It is the kind of service that wins the confidence of the average country man and increases his respect for the school and the teacher.

The school terracing level should see service on all the farms of the community where it is needed. It should be a piece of community-owned property put to intensive, practical use, and not a curio treasured behind the doors of a locked cabinet at the schoolhouse. The farmers and their sons will do the work, if the teacher will only take the initiative and show them the way.

Recently at a teachers' institute one teacher remarked to some others talking in a group at intermission: "The terracing level helped me put the school on the map out at my place. It was one of our big trump cards in the game of education out there last year." A few days later it was my good fortune to be in that man's school. The older pupils went out into a neighboring field and made the survey for a terrace as I directed. The confidence and alacrity with which they handled the tri-

pod, level, tape line and elevation rod and target were sufficient to demonstrate that they knew very well what they were about. The survey was developed and stakes were driven into the ground marking its path for a distance of more than two hundred yards on that old red-clay hillside badly butchered with gullies. It was not a piece of haphazard guesswork; it was a piece of scientific accuracy taught through the agency of a school that was intelligently going about the practical solution of a few economic problems in an agricultural district.

An East-Texas county superintendent recently said: "The county farm demonstrator and I have been seriously contemplating a campaign for a terracing level, Babcock milk tester, spraying apparatus, and possibly a compound microscope for each of about fifteen of the best schools in this county. Our farms need terracing; dairying should be encouraged; we have to fight insect pests and fungous diseases in our orchards and gardens with spraying mixtures; and if the children could look through the microscope down into the world of diatoms occasionally, I think it would be of great value to them in the intelligent understanding and application of many of the laws of health and sanitation back at home. And besides that, these very

instruments of education would be of immense strategic importance in giving the schools prominence and in helping them to enlist the interests of many patrons now indifferent to the cause of education."

5. **Arithmetic Instruction That Reaches the Home.**—When asked what text was being used in arithmetic, a teacher replied, "None." He meant this statement for the upper grades only, and it was almost literally true, though the adopted text was used to some extent as a sort of reference book. The boys had been required to take tape lines and make measurements of every silo, wheat bin, corn bin and cistern in the school district, and compute their respective capacities in tons, bushels and gallons. They had been taught the use of the carpenter's square and could cut a rafter of any desired pitch, run a simple stairway, make a miter-box, and do a great many other practical things. They knew how to make a simple drawing to any desired scale. They could make out a bill for the lumber in a garage, a small barn, or a simple farmhouse. They had learned the use of fractions and percentage in making up balanced rations for dairy cows, flocks of laying hens, and other exercises taken from the industries of the community.

Then I thought of another school, somewhere in Texas, where the pupils knew the printed rules, the formulæ and the examples of the text, but were helpless in the practical applications of them. They could make a good grade on a written examination, but they could not keep an accurate set of farm accounts, and were nonplused when given a problem not taken from the books they had studied. Realizing the extreme artificiality of this school, one of the patrons with a clear conception of the kind of education that educates for practical usefulness, paid it a visit and gave some tests one day. He took twenty-three new neckties and a sample of cotton with him when he went to the school. There were just twenty-three boys and girls in the ninth and tenth grades. He took the neckties to offer as prizes for the correct solution of a simple problem taken from his business that morning. He held up the white sample of cotton in his right hand and said: "This sample is taken from the big bale you see just across the road by the scales. I bought that bale this morning. It is classed as strict middling. The quotation for strict middling to-day is 12.875 cents per pound. The man I bought this cotton from had a small account down at my store. Now, I want you pupils to go over in a body and

get the weight of that bale from the weightmaster; then go down to the store and get an itemized statement of this man's account from the bookkeeper, and tell me what was the balance due him on his cotton. No pupil is to assist another in the calculations made."

Thirty minutes later the twenty-three pupils returned with the necessary data. They were all puzzled and some of them dumfounded. They had never had an example presented in that way in their lives. They knew arithmetic and knew it very well, too. But the arithmetic they knew was inevitably glued to the printed pages they had studied. They could not dissociate it from the book and turn it to practical use. Only two neckties were awarded as prizes for success. Twenty-one persons failed to solve the simple problem, and twenty-one neckties were returned to their places in the showcase in the village store.

Here we have two types of schools. One is real, the other artificial; one is born of present-day needs, the other a decrepit creature of tradition; one is a beacon light of usefulness in the community, the other a silent partner in the community's affairs; one is productive of healthy school spirit, the other a breeder of educational apathy; one is seen and felt for good, the other is obscure and unappreciated.

6. **Live-Stock Judging.**—Three years ago I received a picture of a beautiful Hereford animal with a group of schoolboys standing in a semicircle about him. Each boy had a score-card in his hand and was making notations of all the strong and weak points of this animal. In short, they were taking part of their final examination in the elementary course in animal husbandry given in that school. Another picture contained a beautiful driving horse and this group of boys standing about him with score-cards in hand in the same manner.

Since that time I have received quite a number of pictures similar to these from other schools in the state. One distinguishing characteristic of this group of pictures is that some interested farmer or group of farmers can be seen in the background, or to the extreme right or the extreme left, in almost every one of them. These attentive onlookers tell a gratifying story. Their very presence proves that the school is dealing with things that interest them.

The successful school of the twentieth century must reach the people back at home as well as the children in attendance. It is a mistake to think that the public school exists for children only. It has numerous obligations to the parents and other

grown people. Much of its success depends upon its skill in administering to their wants and needs. The judging of live stock, boys' and girls' industrial clubs, home projects, the school fair and the social center, when discreetly used, are a few of the devices by which these ends may be attained.

7. **Home Projects.**—One of the most industrious creatures on earth is a healthy child. Normal children crave employment. They are anxious for things to do. They are eternally busy. Idleness is contrary to their nature. It is a mistake to say that children are lazy. They merely rebel against doing things that are of no interest to them. Grown people do the same.

The normal human animal of all ages is a creature of action. Children may not always choose the most profitable thing to do, but they are always doing something. Enforced idleness will destroy much of the best there is in them. The normal youth likes to express himself in deeds wrought with his own hands. He will do so if the opportunity is given him and the stimulus of encouragement is judiciously applied.

In one community a boy recently improvised a wireless telegraph instrument and innocently amused himself by intercepting passing messages until fed-

eral officials came out and confiscated his apparatus; in another, a boy made and installed a kitchen sink, doing all the necessary plumbing with his own hands; at a third place, trap-nests for the pure-bred hens and brooders for the little chicks were made by a lad of twelve years; and at literally scores of places, boys have raised prize-winning acres of corn and peanuts, and have fed calves and pigs that took first premiums in the show rings at the county fairs. In like manner, homes have been screened, screens have been kept in good repair, breeding-places for flies and mosquitoes have been destroyed, ants have been exterminated, gardens grown, and fruits and vegetables preserved for home consumption by schools that have fostered projects to be conducted by pupils at home outside of school hours.

These projects conducted at home have not only furnished many practical problems for the arithmetic classes, valuable lessons in live-stock feeding and home sanitation, and the richest sort of content for papers in original English composition, but they have given the homes they have touched an entirely different attitude toward the school. These schools have made themselves centers of immediate service to the homes, and the homes are respecting and admiring them in return for it. The well-adapted

and well-directed project is a worthy instrument of education and a valuable instrument of moral strategy for the school when properly used by the sagacious teacher.

8. **The Community Fair.**—Two years ago one of the best two-teacher schools in Texas held a community fair. The essential features of it were an exhibition of school work and farm products, and a demonstration of cooking and food preparation by the women and girls in the community. The farm exhibits were shown to good advantage and gave the appearance of a county fair. Seventeen farms were represented by as many small booths. The farm exhibits for these seventeen booths were collected and arranged by the children under the direction of the teacher. The final arrangements were made on Saturday morning, and the people were invited to come in the afternoon. They came and spread supper on the school ground and stayed till ten o'clock at night. A week later one of the local papers published the following account:

"The girls from eight to sixteen years had a table beautifully decorated with flowers and spread with white linen. It was loaded with good things to eat of their own cooking. Prizes were awarded to each of the following culinary articles; cookies,

chocolate pie, potato salad, jelly rolls, ginger snaps, muffins, cocoanut pie, angel food cake, light rolls, and peach jelly.

"The following agricultural products were exhibited: cotton, corn, popcorn, ribbon cane, bunch beans, soy-beans, peanuts, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes, radishes, muskmelons, watermelons, pears, squashes, pecans, broomcorn, honey, peaches, apples and sunflowers.

"After partaking of the good things to eat for supper, a good program was rendered in the usual way."

Six months later the same paper said:

"This community was greatly benefited by that meeting. It is still profiting from it, for the after-stimulation is still vibrant in its nerves. Other social and educational gatherings have followed. Those people have discovered something about themselves they did not know before. They have a rich treasure of good local talent that has been thoroughly unconscious of itself all these years and lying dormant from lack of use. The community has just begun to realize what it can do. Industrially, it is experiencing a new birth. Some good authorities are guessing that a number of enviable agricultural prizes will be taken at the county fair next year by the schoolboys. Socially, the people are awake. Educationally, they are looking up. The work of a more extended use of the school plant is well begun. It has brought a new era in the activities of those people. And every country school in Texas would multiply its usefulness many times if it were more closely articulated with the lives of the people who patronize it.

In this way the schools could add much to the attractiveness of country life."

9. **School-Improvement Day.**—The oftener the patrons of a school meet at the schoolhouse, the greater are the chances of their being valuable school workers. When the path from the home to the schoolhouse door is dim and seldom traveled, the home is usually apathetic in its support of the school. When people assemble en masse at school, church or club, the tendency is to forget selfish personal affairs and become community-minded. Public-spirited people never live to themselves. No man can be a good citizen and live alone. Exclusiveness harbors selfishness.

School-Improvement Day should be one of the big annual events in every rural-school district. It is a most legitimate way of calling the people together and fastening their attention for an entire day on the physical needs of the school. When the school grounds need leveling, when weeds that have grown during vacation need cutting and burning, and when window-panes are to be replaced and desks repaired, there is no better plan than for the patrons of the school to combine a day of labor with a day of pleasure by bringing dinner to the schoolhouse and doing the work themselves. That is

much better than hiring some carpenter to do the work and paying for it out of the school revenues. The economy is a small matter. The effect in the attitude of the patrons toward the school is the main thing. It takes spirit and enthusiasm, as well as finances and equipment, to run a school. It is hard for a public school to rise very much above the level of the community's desire for enlightenment.

The foregoing are only a few of the many devices that may contribute to the generating of wholesome school spirit, but space forbids their further enumeration.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

What is the most conspicuous piece of school improvement you can make in your school this year? Have your playgrounds been properly improved and attractively beautified? Would a terracing level or a Babcock milk tester in the school meet a need in the community where you are working this year? Have you been guilty of confining too much of your arithmetic instruction to the text-book? Do you have any patrons who are practical ranchmen or stock-raisers to whom a few school lessons and demonstrations in live-stock judging would appeal? If you are not capable of conducting a live-stock judging contest, is there any one locally available who would do it for you? How about the county farm demonstration agent? Do you have a copy of the bulletin on school

and community fairs from the University of Texas? What are the chief industries of your school patrons? What are some of the home projects you might undertake this year?

# CHAPTER IV

## Some Vitalizing Educational Agencies and Organizations

Teachers should be familiar with the activities discussed in this chapter because of their vitalizing influences among rural people. When skilfully employed they simplify many of the difficulties that stand in the way of healthful school sentiment.

1. **The Boys' School-Improvement Club.**—In a rural school of four teachers I saw modern drinking fountains for the boys and another group just like them for the girls. There was a shower bath for the boys down on the athletic field. The water was supplied from a well by a gasoline pump at the teacher's home more than two hundred yards away. There were some new tennis courts, and a new flagpole had just been put up. One of the old school buildings, abandoned when a consolidation was made, had been moved, repaired and equipped with new apparatus for the agricultural laboratory. I asked how all these improvements had been made. The principal said, "By the Boys' School-Improvement Club." Then I got the following information:

The people in that district were very poor. Most of them owned their homes, but the farms were quite small and unprofitable. The district contained only sixteen square miles and the property values in it were so small that a fifty cent tax produced less than four hundred dollars of available school revenue per year.

There were about twenty high-minded, ambitious boys and young men in the community. Most of them would have taken a college education had they been financially able to pay their ways through school. Being unable to do this, they decided to make the most of what was left for them at home. For this purpose the School-Improvement Club was organized with twenty-two members, each member pledging himself to plant one acre of cotton and contribute the proceeds for the purchase of needed school equipment.

At the instance of the club, near the end of the school year, a big educational day was planned. It was the biggest public event ever in the history of the community. Nearly two thousand people were present. In the parade there were seven decorated floats, the school orchestra, the members of the boys' and girls' athletic teams marching in their uniforms, and more than one thousand citizens

keeping step in double file. The day's program consisted of music, speaking, exhibitions of school work, athletic contests, and stock-judging contests. The proceeds from the sales of candy, ice-cream, and cold drinks for the day yielded a net profit of one hundred and sixty dollars to the treasury of the organization. This amount was promptly used to meet one of the payments on the new piano and to purchase additional equipment for the domestic-science laboratory.

The principal of this school knew how to harness the excess energy of the boys in that locality and apply it to useful enterprises. The painting and repairing of the old building used for a laboratory and all the plumbing in the installation of the water-works were done by the boys. These boys, filled with civic pride and the desire for industrial efficiency, were rapidly converting that poverty-stricken community into a better place for the people to live. They constituted one of the most inspiring school-improvement organizations I have ever seen.

2. **The Boy Scouts.**—The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America, with headquarters in New York City, was originally incorporated in February, 1910, and chartered by Congress June

15, 1916.* The organization now has a disciplined group of 397,208 Boy Scouts and Scout officials definitely organized. There are 28,593 Scout Masters and assistants. Another 54,402 act as councilmen and troop committeemen. The Scout officials are clean men and most of them college-bred.

"The Scout law, covering twelve fundamental principles, requires a Scout first of all to be trustworthy. That means that he must not tell a lie, cheat, or deceive, but keep trust sacred. A Scout is loyal to all to whom loyalty is due, including his Scout leader, his home, his parents and his country. Furthermore, a Scout is helpful, prepared at all times to save life, help injured persons and do at least one good turn daily. A Scout is friendly to all—a brother to every other Scout. A Scout is courteous, especially to women, children and old people, and he must not take any pay for being courteous. A Scout is kind to animals and does not kill or hurt any living creature needlessly. A Scout is obedient. A Scout is cheerful, even when facing hardship and drudgery. A Scout is thrifty. A Scout is clean in body and thought, stands for clean speech, clean sport, clean habits, and travels with a clean crowd."

No expensive equipment is required for a Scout organization. All that is needed is the outdoors, a group of boys and a competent leader. Outdoor

*Address all communications to The Boy Scouts of America, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Scout training, with its hiking, swimming, camping, cooking, signaling, woodcraft, nature study and the like, enriches the fellowship and respect the boys have for the man teach who is qualified and willing to lead them as Scout Master. The boy in his early teens idolizes the grown man who has interests in common with him and is capable of adopting him as a companion and associate. His hero is the man who has the skill to lead him and the ability to do the simplest sort of practical things better than he can.

There are a few men teachers with a practical knowledge of boys and a love for outdoor sports and outdoor life who are making very valuable Scout Masters. A hike and a camp with four meals in the woods from Friday afternoon to Saturday night puts them in closer touch with the real life of the boys than a whole month in the class-room and on the school ground. These men are valuable civic and moral benefactors to the groups they lead. They are reducing the percentage of vicious habits and moral delinquency among boys and simplifying some of the most difficult problems of school discipline. Every man teacher would do well to familiarize himself with this organization and consider its possibilities for good in his community.

3. **Camp-Fire Girls.**—The Camp-Fire Girls had its beginning as an organization in 1911.* It attempts to do for the girls what the Boy Scouts is doing for the boys. Its object is to take small groups of girls that are socially homogeneous and interpret daily things in terms of romance, beauty and usefulness. A few enterprising women teachers have made profitable use of this order for young girls as part of their program of education and recreation.

4. **The Story-Teller's League.**—As a rule the rural communities that practise cooperation in education and industry to the best advantage are those where the people spend the greatest amount of their leisure time together. Any agency that brings people together for social and cultural improvement has a psychic value that leads to mutual understanding and systematic cooperation. In this way individualism is conquered and selfish persons changed into useful members of the cooperative group.

Among the social and cultural activities in one of the best organized rural communities of my knowledge is the Young People's Story-Teller's

*National Headquarters of the Camp-Fire Girls, 461 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

League. The young people meet two evenings each month under the direction of appointed leaders for two hours of pleasure and pastime at story-telling. Sometimes the program of stories is taken from Greek literature. Other times it is made up from the folk-lore of the Danes, the Scotch, the Hindus, the American negro, or some other interesting people. One time, I remember, the program was confined entirely to O. Henry, and another time to Hawthorne. Again the program was of a miscellaneous character, including the stories of "Little Black Sambo and the Three Tigers," "How the Camel Got His Hump," "The Mongoose," by Strickland Gillilan, and several others highly appropriate for the occasion.

Most of this group of young people have learned how to tell a story in a forceful, interesting manner. Their personalities and powers of speech have been greatly strengthened by this practise. Besides that, the evenings spent in story-telling constitute happy chapters in the lives of all the people in attendance. They have been a valuable contributing influence to the present high state of social and economic solidarity in that school district. They are worthy of duplication in many other places where talented young people reside.

5. **The Young People's Reading Circle.**—In a few instances the reading circle for the senior young people has proved quite popular. This organization usually includes a homogeneous group, seldom exceeding fifteen in number, composed of teachers, grown pupils and young people not in school. It may meet at the schoolhouse or at the homes of different members of the circle from time to time.

In one village the reading circle of fourteen persons meets at the home of some one of its members every Friday evening at eight o'clock. While this plan is working successfully at that place, I would not recommend it for general practise. The reading-room of the schoolhouse is, as a rule, the more logical meeting-place.

I have been present at two meetings of reading circles in rural places the past year. At one meeting Bryant's "Thanatopsis" was read and discussed; at the other Hawthorne's "Great Stone Face" was the lesson for the evening. Both of these occasions were social and cultured feasts for all present.

The reading circle well conducted has great possibilities as an allied school activity. It should be more generally encouraged by all teachers in rural districts.

6. **The Interscholastic League.**—For the last nine years contests of various sorts among the public schools of Texas have been promoted by the University. They now include contests in debating, declamation, essay writing, spelling and athletics. More than two thousand five hundred schools were members of the Interscholastic League organization last year.

The league contests have done much to awaken school spirit among pupils and patrons. Their object is to bring the competitive instincts into action and foster the spirit of friendly rivalry among neighboring school communities. Schools are always proud of their winning champions. And the champions themselves are abundantly compensated for all their efforts through the enjoyment of a new and inspiring self-confidence, the result and side companion of successful achievement.

The interscholastic debates and declamations have been wonderful engines of education in this state for the past five or six years. It is estimated that three hundred thousand people heard the patriotic declamations given last year. The debates on Compulsory Education and Woman Suffrage had a tremendous influence on public opinion in their time and were, no doubt, instrumental in ha-

stening the day when new laws relating to them were written on our statute books.

The athletic contests are doing much to purify interscholastic sports. Less than a decade ago school athletics in Texas were deplorably corrupt. But shoddy tricks and foul plays to win are now much less prevalent. Honesty in athletics is achieving popularity, and crookedness is being branded with the odium of public disapproval. New conceptions of good sport are being established. Teams are learning how to contest for the sake of the sport and not merely to win the game.

Membership in the Interscholastic League has become a popular thing for public schools of every rank in Texas. It has given many schools a chance to prove themselves and get on the educational map. And in using the League to promote community welfare, teachers should not overlook the fact that they are also establishing a reputation for themselves that will likely lead to promotion. Every state in the South should have such an organization as the Interscholastic League in Texas.

7. **The Parent-Teacher's Association.**—The parent-teacher's association may be a benefit or it may be a detriment to the welfare of the public school. I have seen instances of both results.

Where there is cordial and sympathetic cooperation between the head of the school and the leading spirits of the association, it has great possibilities for beneficial service to the school. But when the association presumptuously takes over the reins of school administration, as sometimes happens, friction is sure to come. When that occurs, the principal of the school is usually to blame. The far-sighted principal will think and plan in advance of the association, and anticipating possible disagreements that might arise, prevent their occurrence through the assignment of duties beset with less danger to the peace of the administration. The best way to handle a parent-teacher's association is through the judicious assignment of work for it to do.

But all principals of schools do not possess the faculty of managing a parent-teacher's association successfully. One day the principal of a five-teacher school was apparently very unhappy. I ventured to ask the president of the school board what was wrong. "He is sick; he has the worst case of Mothers' Club in Texas," was the amusing reply. This trustee was entirely correct. A few unsophisticated mothers had the upper hand and were directing most of the internal affairs of the

school. They had prescribed the length of some of the class periods, selected books poorly adapted to the needs of the library, wrecked school athletics, and patronized most of the grafting school supply agents that came their way that year. Indeed, I saw them present the school with a set of Stoddard's Lectures purchased at an exorbitant price, when the library was by no means adequately supplied with elementary reading material for the pupils below the eighth grade. That principal had abundant cause for being sick and unhappy.

In another school there was the utmost harmony between the mothers' club and the administration. The playground equipment was new and attractive. The piano and some very appropriate school pictures had been purchased the year before. A new Victrola and forty records had just been procured. But most interesting of all was the way the organized mothers cooperated in equipping the domestic-science laboratory and in securing the teacher of domestic science.

An agricultural laboratory had been provided for the boys in high school. The mothers began saying: "If it is well that our sons become more efficient farmers, is it not equally as well that we prepare our daughters for greater efficiency as

farmers' wives? If a balanced ration for a pig, a calf, or a dairy cow be a matter of importance, is not a balanced ration for the family at home of still greater importance?" So the principal of the school, seizing the opportunity, inspired them to make the effort to raise funds for the purchase of laboratory equipment and the employment of a domestic-science teacher. They accomplished what they undertook. Standard apparatus was installed and a competent teacher employed. But the four teachers already employed constituted, in practise, a standing advisory committee to this mothers' club in all it did. These teachers were sagacious experts in the administration of school affairs, and through them the organized mothers had learned that it is better to cooperate than to dictate. So, after all, the secret of managing a mothers' club rests in the teacher's ability to assign it timely and appropriate things to do and to cooperate with it as a sort of silent partner and confidential adviser in the accomplishment of the duties assigned.

8. **Other Vitalizing Activities.**—Several other agencies for unifying the interests of young people and stimulating the cooperative instincts among them might be mentioned. Among them I would name the dramatic club, choral club, orchestra, liter-

ary society, and the various industrial clubs for boys and girls: corn clubs, pig clubs, poultry clubs, canning clubs, sewing circles and the like. For the community at large there are the fair association, pure seed association, breeders' association, cooperative marketing association, etc.

Not all the projects and activities mentioned in this chapter are ever practicable or even desirable in any one community, but there are many communities where, with the proper adaptations, one or more of them can be put to good use. Teachers will do well to keep them all in mind.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Name some school-improvement projects that fall within the province of a boys' school-improvement association. Show how the boys' school-improvement association can be made a valuable means for teaching practical community civics.

2. What are some of the principles that the Boy Scouts stand for? What are some of the qualifications of a good Scout Master?

3. What are some of the qualifications of a woman teacher who can make a success of a girls' Camp-Fire organization? Describe one type of woman who would be sure to fail in such an undertaking.

4. What are some of the conditions under which a story-teller's league might reasonably be expected to succeed? Describe a group of young people who

would give their approval and support to such an organization. What are some of the advantages that telling a story in one's own language has over telling it in the exact language of the author?

5. Name some of the conditions that would make a young people's reading circle practicable. Describe an ideal teacher for promoting and directing a reading circle.

6. Give some reasons for the remarkable success of the Interscholastic League in Texas. What has been its influence on interscholastic athletics? To what extent has public opinion been influenced by the interscholastic debates and declamations? Would it be well for every southern state to have an organization similar to the Interscholastic League in Texas?

7. Name some of the benefits to be derived from the parent-teacher's association. How may a parent-teacher's association become a nuisance to a school? Give the best method for managing a parent-teacher's association.

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## CHAPTER V

### School Playgrounds

1. **Playgrounds and Democracy.**—After three years of the rebellion in Mexico, an intelligent refugee said to me: "I wish Mexico had the playgrounds of Texas. They would soon teach our people how to govern themselves. It is a saying as old as the Greeks that the playground is the laboratory of democracy. And very truly it is. It is on the playground in the early years of childhood that the lessons of compromise, give-and-take, and respect for the other fellow are first learned. And these concepts are of fundamental value in making citizens for a democracy. But the unfortunate children of my country have poor opportunities for friendly contests among themselves on the playgrounds. We have very few playgrounds down there.

"Then, again," he said, "the games that interest our people are not like your games. Our people flock about the bull-ring, the cock-pit and the roulette wheel, while your people are witnessing contests on the football gridiron, the baseball

diamond and the tennis court. Your national sports bring into action a group of interests entirely different from those elicited by the recreational practises of my land. They furnish a fine background in training for team-work and group activities in local and state affairs."

No doubt we are forgetful of the values of our playgrounds. They are so commonplace and universal that we do not appreciate their full worth. We accept their benefits with thorough indifference. But fortunate is America that the playground is an indispensable adjunct of her public schools.

2. **Playgrounds and Juvenile Delinquency.**— Only recently I visited a three-teacher school one Friday afternoon. The principal's face bore the unmistakable impress of a week laden with worry and exasperation. She characterized a group of adolescent boys as "positively iniquitous." They had turned a man's hogs out of the pen, tied a dog and a cat together on the playground, thrown stones at some passers-by, raided a pecan orchard, and dropped some live ducks into the school cistern. The truth is, they had the teacher bluffed and they knew it.

But these rowdy youngsters were merely normal boys. They were the sort that would fight for an

estimable senior friend and leader in the very face of grim death. Their blood was red, their nerves full of vitality and their muscles tingling for action. I saw them all. I talked to them collectively and to most of them individually. They were fine young fellows.

What was the trouble? They were leaderless. They were ruddy with health, and in each one of them was a pent-up reservoir of excess energy with no provision for its escape through the activities of a well-regulated playground. The school yard was a wilderness of weeds, cobblestones and scraps of old paper. There was not a single piece of playground apparatus in sight. The pupils were not encouraged to play. They ran riot at recess. They got into mischief for want of other things to engage their attention during the hours of intermission.

All normal boys like group athletics and playground recreations. Healthy boys are creatures of action and industry. They resent uninteresting employment, but they are not lazy. One of the easiest animals on earth to control is a normal boy. Give him something he likes to do and plenty of it. That solves the difficulty. The boy that does not respond to this treatment is either subnormal or in poor health.

3. **Playing for Sport vs. Playing to Win the Game.**—I believe the Englishmen are better sportsmen than the Americans. The average Englishman will ask you, "Was it a good game?" The average American will ask you, "What was the score?" The Englishman plays for the sport. The American plays to win the game.

And the same spirit dominates most of the American sportsmen in field with gun or on stream with fishing rod. Every year I go to the Texas coast with a party of fifteen for a week's fishing in the surf. The only measure of sportsmanship some of those good fellows have is the fulness of the creel. Their first inquiry is, "How many this morning, and how big are they?" Seldom do they ask, "How did you get them, and what sorts of baits and lures did you use?" With an hour of skilful maneuvering the real sportsman will conquer a one-hundred-pound tarpon with a delicate number twelve line, while the pseudo-sportsman and semi-savage will overpower him and drag him in, hand over, with a cord strong enough for hawser in less than two minutes.

We have those from the field, stream and athletic court who pose as sportsmen who, in truth, have never learned the first letter in the alphabet of clean

high-class sport. These savages are on the side-lines at every athletic contest and in the ranks of almost every hunting and fishing party. Not long ago I was in an all-night fox hunt. The fox, tired and exhausted, was bayed in a huge oak tree just before day. Then some unsportsman-like brutes came from a neighboring farm-house. "Chunk him out and let the dogs kill him," they began to ejaculate. "No," interrupted a high-minded sportsman. "Leave him alone and we shall have another fine race some night next week."

Many a time in the primitive days of less than twenty years ago I heard spectators shout to the football contestants, "Use 'em rough! Hit 'em hard! Kill 'em!" And cracked heads, bleeding noses and promiscuous bruises gave convincing attestations that the murderous instincts of the players responded to these gruesome promptings with all the ferocity of the ancient jungle. But a new day dawned and is now well advanced in college sports. Intercollegiate athletics are infinitely cleaner than they were a dozen years ago. Our college people are learning how to play. But many of the country people have not yet learned how to play or what to play for. "Rotten umpire," "Put 'em out," and all sorts of rude jeers at the players

are much more common in the country than in our city ball parks.

Last year I saw a country ball game terminate in a free-for-all fight. Bats, mits and masks flew recklessly in the air. Blue epithets whizzed in all directions. After the storm had subsided, a venerable man calmly remarked, "Well, if the boys could play oftener, they might learn how to play without fighting." He was correct. To prohibit baseball till boys learn how to play would be as absurd as prohibiting them from going in the water till they learn to swim. Country boys will learn to play agreeably and what to play for when the school playgrounds are used more intensively and supervised more closely.

4. **Interscholastic Athletics.**—Friendly rivalry fosters school spirit. It begets loyalty for the home team. Every community looks upon its own champions with pride. Interscholastic contests also blot out much of petty narrowness by giving pupils a broader acquaintance. The knowledge "that there are other people beyond the mountains" makes a chapter of no inconsequential value in a child's education. I was reared in a quiet country district. We never went very far from home or saw very much of other people. The local pastor often told us we were

the brightest, most promising children he had ever seen. The politicians came out occasionally and told us the same thing. In our childish innocence, we believed what they said. I thought that we had the best church choir, the prettiest girls, the handsomest carriages and the biggest houses in the land. We were the Boston of culture and the hub of the universe. We were in the center of all that was worth emulating and living for. We were It. But when I grew older and saw farther, my childish eyes were disillusioned. It was a revelation to me that the next community had as pretty girls, as sweet singers, as well-groomed horses and as big houses as we. And I find there are some children in the world to-day just as self-centered as I was as a child.

Interscholastic athletics also give a fine training in minor responsibilities. The captains, managers, treasurers and secretaries of the teams participate in these responsibilities. Games have to be scheduled, equipments procured and transportation provided. The adroit teacher will delegate most of these duties to the pupils' representatives, reserving advisory and veto powers to himself.

But athletic contests are beset with certain difficulties and disadvantages. Chief among these are

providing suitable chaperons for the teams on trips away from home; taking time out of school for playing match games; and annoyances from cheap "barber-shop" sports not in school who encourage foul plays in order to win. No high-school team should ever be sent away from home to fill an engagement without a responsible adult chaperon, preferably a member of the faculty. Protests against taking time out of school for match games can usually be met satisfactorily by scheduling games on Saturdays. Corrupt coaching from low-bred outsiders can best be combated through the sense of honor and the respect for fair play and clean sportsmanship instilled into the pupils by the teacher in the class-room and on the supervised playground while the teams are in training.

5. **Teachers and Parents Not in Sympathy with Athletic Sports.**—A sick man aroused himself from a delirious stupor and said: "I have passed through the most miserable hour of my life. I have been dreaming that I had turned to a woodpile." And so it is. There are some living people who have let portions of their natures die as dead as woodpiles and haystacks. They have all their physical members, but they go limping through life with a half, or a fourth, or a fortieth of their normal spiritual en-

tities gone. They have forgot that they once enjoyed the things that normal children and young people of to-day enjoy. The most unpardonable of these distorted unfortunates are certain grouchy old bachelors and old maids in the school-room.

The following story and confession came to me from a man I know very well. "I can get very little out of an athletic contest," he said. "I live near a college athletic court, but I have not seen a game in five years. When the games are on, I hear the band playing and five thousand voices singing college songs fit to go into ecstasies, but it all has no lure for me. Sometimes I view myself with pity as I sit in my office all too conscious of my incapacity to share in the merriment about me.

"Eight years ago, in the psychological laboratory, I was convinced of my subnormality in this respect. I immediately set about to cure it. I went to the athletic headquarters and purchased a season ticket to all the games for the year. There were thirty-two events on it. I was determined to make myself go and get into the spirit of the contests. Four events had passed, and I discovered I had attended none of them. Then I renewed my resolutions and purchased another ticket. I thought I would take some charitable friend along with me who

knew the games and would help me get into the spirit of them. But when the year was over one of the tickets had twenty-eight untaken events on it and the other had twenty-six. I still have them both.

"Ten years ago I taught in a small college. During my two years there I was the most unpopular male member of the entire faculty with the boys who loved athletic sports. I had very little sympathy with such activities. I could see but little else in them than a waste of time. I know now I was unfair to the boys in some instances. I have come to see that the trouble was not with the boys. It was with me. They were healthy normal fellows. As for the enjoyment of the competitive sports on the athletic field, I was an anemic monstrosity.

"I regret my inability to appreciate a ball game. But a thing still more deplorable is the fact that there are so many parents, school trustees and teachers just as deeply afflicted with similar incapacities who have never once realized it. It is criminally unjust for them to exercise authority over children and young people in school. It would pay every teacher introspectively to take stock of himself occasionally and see just where he stands. I

think I could deal much more fairly with boys now than I did ten years ago. I know more about myself."

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. How may regard for law and respect for the rights of others be taught on a basketball court? Democratic government is nothing more than team-work for group betterment on a gigantic scale. Its benefits are the fruits of cooperation. Show how the spirit of team-work and cooperation is stimulated by baseball.

2. Will giving a bad boy something he likes to do make him less difficult to control? Why do boys without interesting employment on the playground so often get into mischief at recess? Are normal boys naturally good or bad? Is there any creature more devotedly loyal to an estimable leader than a boy?

3. Why is the average Englishman a better sportsman than the average American? Do your pupils play for the sport or to win the game? Account for interscholastic athletics being purer than they were ten years ago. Why are fights more frequent among country baseball teams than among college baseball teams?

4. What are some of the beneficial results from friendly rivalry among neighboring schools? Why should the teacher always have advisory and veto powers on the students' athletic councils? Do you allow your basketball team to go away from home unchaperoned by some teacher or other responsible person? Do your trustees protest against taking time out of school for match games? Are there any

unscrupulous persons not in school who would corrupt the minds and practises of your players?

5. Are you a lover of plays, games and athletic sports at school? How many adult people do you know whose faculty for appreciating athletic contests is dead and functionless? How about yourself?

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# CHAPTER VI

## The Social Factor in Rural Life

1. **The Country As a Victim of Inadequate Social and Cultural Opportunities.**—In the heart of the Cross-Timbers, seventy-five miles west of Fort Worth and nine miles from the Fort Worth and Rio Grande Railroad, is a small country-school district called Selden. In the fall of 1905, within a single month, fifteen young people from that place packed their trunks and went away to school. Some of the farmers estimated that their going away would take several thousand dollars out of the community to be spent elsewhere. Others said it would be economy to maintain a first-class high school at home. But most of them failed to see that the loss of the presence and good influence of those young people was far more serious than the cost of maintaining them in the schools they had chosen to attend.

I was in that community two months later. The experience was most depressing. The church choir had lost much of its best material. The choir leader and the pianist were both gone. The Sunday-

school was sadly depleted. The superintendent was discouraged. The whole place seemed desolate, bereaved and melancholy.

That community had paid the penalty attached to social and educational neglect. It had failed to satisfy the social and cultural hungers of its most enterprising young people. Some of its most vital blood had been taken from its veins. It was impoverished by the absence of some of the people it could least afford to lose. And what is worse still, only two of that entire group of fifteen virile young persons have returned to that community to make it their permanent home, and ten of the remaining thirteen have gone to the towns and cities to live.

One time I made a close examination of a rural school with four teachers where eight boys were doing high-school work. I asked these boys what they meant to do after graduation. "We want to attend a business college and equip ourselves to hold positions in the city," was the unanimous reply. They gave no particular reason for not wanting to stay in the country more than that it did not suit them. Note the following questions and answers:

"What do you do for pastime?"

"Well, nothing specially."

"Have you a ball team?"

"Yes, but it's mighty weak."

"Have you a tennis team?"

"No."

"Have you a dramatic club?"

"No."

"Have you a musical organization of any sort?"

"No."

"When have you had a public gathering in the school auditorium?"

"Not since November; almost three months."

"What do you do when Sunday comes?"

"Sometimes we go to church, when there is any."

"How often do you have church services?"

"Once a month at one of the churches, and just whenever they can get a preacher at the other one."

Who could blame those boys for not wanting to stay at that place? They were dying of social hunger. Their desire to get away was one of the very best evidences that there was something in each of them inherently worth while. Had they been contented to remain in that monotonous environment, it would have been because they were genuinely stupid fellows.

Thus the town continues to levy a tribute on the country which it takes each year in the form of some of its very best blood. Biologically, some

scientists think that this means a rapid lowering of the life tension and blood vigor of the country people. Those remaining behind become the dominant stock and reproduce their kind for another generation. Upon them the same selective process is repeated. The country has cause for alarm. Normal people like to be where things are happening. Solitude and ignorance are contrary to their desires. If the opportunities for culture and social recreation are not provided for them in the country, they will seek them elsewhere.

2. **The Social Factor as a Moral Force.**— Nearly five years ago, in the course of a lecture in a small country town, the question was asked, "Where is the social center in this village?" "The barber-shop," a voice replied. The speaker had been in that barber-shop, the only one in the village, just before coming to the auditorium. Through the half-open door in the rear he got the full benefit of all the foul vapors from that unwholesome place. Since that time I have collected and tabulated a list of one hundred and thirty-two social centers in rural and village districts where I have been. They run as follows: barber-shop, twenty-six; depot, twenty-one; drug-store, eighteen; post-office, seventeen; country store, fifteen; garage, eight; schoolhouse,

eight; picture show, five; blacksmith shop, five; school playground, five; livery stable, two; church, two. There is no community without a social center of some sort. The social center is the most popular congregating place for conversation, games, or idle pastime. Some of them are places where boys and girls meet, some are for boys only, and some for boys and men of all ages.

In a certain dismal little village in Texas the old abandoned blacksmith shop with the roof caved in at one corner is the young men's social gathering place. Here they congregate and pitch horseshoes, play dominoes, chew tobacco, smoke, swear, fight and tell indecent stories. The last time I was at that place the justice of the peace's court was in session in the shade of a big oak tree. I counted seventy-nine men and boys of the community present at the meeting. In addition to them were four lawyers and two newspaper men from the county-seat. There were seventeen cases on the court's docket for the day. They consisted of gaming, fighting, drunkenness and profanity.

Most of this group of defendants were boys of good ability. They did not look like a set of moral imbeciles. They were merely the unsuspecting victims of vicious surroundings. Their environ-

ment was a culture medium for vagabonds, criminals and fugitives from justice. They were to be pitied rather than censured. The temptations to mischief were not properly offset by other things.

I fixed the responsibility for his morbid social condition where I think it belonged. I placed it at the doors of the school and the church, of the teachers and the preachers. They were all derelict in the performance of the tasks set before them. Had the church been laboring for the social and moral regeneration of that community as earnestly as it was for the salvation of individual souls in its conventional services held once a month, the moral fiber of those young men would have been appreciably stronger. Had the school been as conscious of its social obligations to those people as it was desirous of maintaining its venerable standards of formal instruction, the roster of defendants before the justice's court would have been numerically smaller. Had there been the proper coordination of religious, educative and recreational activities at that place, much social waste could have been eliminated and some valuable human assets prevented from becoming social liabilities.

In a certain Swedish community ten miles from the railroad there is a beautiful country church.

The lawns are neatly kept, and there are two tennis courts in the churchyard. The pastor of the church is president of the local school board and has served in that capacity for a number of years. He helped organize the band, containing fourteen instruments, and has given much valuable assistance to the athletic teams and the social activities of his people.

In an interview this man said to me: "Our young people do not care to go away to the city for their amusements. We try to provide entertainment for them here at home. We think it a good way to prevent mischief and make leisure hours profitable. I have resided here for eleven years and there has never been a young man arraigned before the courts for a misdemeanor of any sort during that time."

The desire for play and social merriment is as elemental as the law of gravitation. A modicum of leisure rightly employed is a necessary concomitant of health and happiness. No hours have so much to do with the making or the marring of human character as hours of leisure. They are fraught with the greatest possibilities for good and for evil. Most people who go wrong, commit crimes, or get others into trouble do so during hours of leisure given over to idleness.

With more decent church lawns used as community playgrounds, and with more schoolhouses put to practical use as places of amusement and social resort by preachers, teachers and laymen who know how to direct people, an environment much less hostile to good morals can be created. Therein lies one of the greatest possibilities for reducing the present high percentage of crime and moral delinquency among our youth.

3. **Beware of Moving Country Children to Town to Live.**—Moving a family of adolescent children from the country to town is a hazardous experiment. The country child with its desires to see and its passions for adventure is an easy prey for the evils of the city. The newness of the environment and the over-stimulation of the senses is more than the average country-bred child at the age of adolescence can bear with safety. Note the following observations:

During a period of eight years, 1899-1907, forty-seven country families moved into a certain Texas town of less than five thousand population to send their children to school. Belonging to these families were sixty-two children above sixteen years of age and thirty-seven children from thirteen to sixteen years old when they came to town. A study of

these families was made in 1911. Forty-nine of the sixty-two children in the older group were ranked as studious while they were in school, and forty-one were succeeding in the work they had subsequently chosen to follow. Of the thirty-seven in the younger group, not a single one had made a creditable success at anything. Two were in the penitentiary, nine were classed as street loafers, two as professional gamblers, and the rest were without a purpose in life.

It is a great misfortune to the average child to be taken from a quiet country environment to the noise of town during the restless days of adolescence. It costs money to provide social advantages and educational opportunities in the country, but it often costs character to move children to town at this critical time in life.

4. **The Social Factor As a Stimulus to Cooperation.**—Prior to the World War there were approximately eighteen hundred rural credit associations in Denmark and more than twice that number in operation in Germany.* In Holland and Belgium cooperation for industrial and business purposes among the peasant people was also highly developed.

*See Wolff's *Peoples' Banks.*

By doing their banking and borrowing cooperatively, many of the rural people were their own lenders and borrowers of money at low rates of interest. They knew how to produce and how to market cooperatively. Creameries, canneries, packeries and warehouses had been operating successfully under the cooperative plan among rural people for a great many years.

In America the case is quite different. Efforts at industrial cooperation among farmers seldom meet with success. The Grange, the Farmers' Alliance, and the Farmers' Union failed to accomplish most of the very worthy things they set out to do. As local organizations they have lived and flourished in only a few exceptional communities.

Industrial cooperation among most of the rural population of Western Europe seems to be a natural and easy thing, but in America it is next to impossible. Why this great difference? Is it due to special legislation enacted at Copenhagen, Berlin, Brussels or The Hague? No. Is it due to a peculiarly favored economic environment enjoyed by the European peasants? Not directly so. It is due, in the main, to a difference in social attitude.

The European peasants are more intimately acquainted with one another than the American

farmers are. Many of them live in small village communities. They see one another every day. There is much social life among them. Neighbors meet neighbors and have opportunities to exchange ideas during their hours of leisure almost every evening. The whole environment has a socializing tendency. This makes for community-mindedness. The people think collectively as well as individually. Cooperation follows naturally and easily.

In most places the rural people of America are great strangers to one another. It would mean much for community interests in general if friends would meet friends and neighbors meet neighbors oftener than they ordinarily do. They should get together oftener just for the sake of association. An aggregation of strangers can never make a team of community workers.

A rural-uplift club one time adopted this very appropriate slogan: "Come out and get acquainted with your neighbor. You may like him." This would be an appropriate slogan for most rural communities in the agricultural South. To have effective community team-work in church, school, or civic endeavor, people must spend enough time together to know one another and catch the spirit of pulling together. The lack of easy and continuous social

intercourse for country people constitutes one of the greatest weaknesses in American rural society.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. The families of best influence are usually among the first to leave the country because of unsatisfactory social and cultural advantages. What biological effect does this likely have on the ones left behind? What is the effect on the church and the school?

2. Every community has its social center. Where is the social center in your community? Name some social centers you have seen? Why are barber-shops, post-offices, drug-stores and depots so often the centers of social exchange in small places? Would the schools and the churches be exceeding their provinces to try to remedy these conditions? Why have they not already made the attempt? Show that some leisure is essential to health and happiness. In what respect are leisure hours dangerous hours?

3. Why is it so dangerous to move a child from the country to town at the age of adolescence?

4. Give one reason why industrial cooperation among the peasants of Western Europe has been more successful than among the farmers of America. How does the independence and isolation of the American farmer act as a barrier against cooperation?

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# CHAPTER VII

## Making Better Citizens

1. **Teachers of Civics Must Get a New Point of View.**—I found in the white schools of fourteen contiguous school districts embracing a rural population of more than thirteen thousand people that only one pupil in each seventeen had ever recited a lesson in civics. Most of those of free school age had dropped out of school before reaching the grade in which civics is taught. This does not augur well for the future of democracy. The times are dangerously unsettled. In some quarters the outlook is desperate. There is serious need for constructive training in citizenship.

Civics as now taught is not giving that training. It is quite unattractive to the mind of the average student below college rank. It misses the mark of his interests. He cares little about the framework of government and the eligibility qualifications of officials. What government does, rather than what it is, would appeal far more forcefully to him. Citizens will do more for their government when they understand better what it is doing for them.

Cox is my neighbor across the street. He is a good citizen because he understands and appreciates all the things the government is doing for him. Each morning when he arises he washes his face in clear water whose purity and freedom from contagion are safeguarded by the city. At breakfast he has a beefsteak carved from a carcass bearing the blue stamp of the federal meat inspector, showing that the animal was in good health and fit for human food when slaughtered. The milk on the table comes from a clean dairy and contains no harmful preservatives, for the State Pure Food Department sees about that. After breakfast the garbage is gathered and put into a receptacle for the city scavenger to carry away, and the dishwater is poured into a city-built sewer instead of a disease-breeding sink-hole in the back yard. Then he goes to town to his office in a building properly lighted and copiously supplied with fresh air in accordance with the building laws. At eleven o'clock he receives word that his youngest child is ill and hastily summons a doctor licensed by the State Board of Medical Examiners, and the doctor issues a prescription to be filled by a pharmacist whose qualifications have been attested to by the state. While all this is going on, the older children of the family are

away at school under the direction of teachers whose eligibility has been certified to by the State Department of Education. On the way home from school in the afternoon these children are escorted over a dangerous street crossing by the hand of a friendly policeman. That night neighbor Cox's home is saved from complete destruction by the speedy and efficient service of the city fire department.

Ten miles in the country, near the Viola school, lives friend Brown. He has oranges, bacon, coffee, sugar, sirup and waffles for breakfast, brought to him from five states by the railroads at reasonable rates fixed by the Interstate Commerce Commission. After breakfast his twelve-year-old son gathers up his free text-books and goes to school. By ten o'clock the rural free delivery mail has arrived. Then friend Brown drives to town with a load of cotton over a public highway not so good as it should be, it is true, but far better than the primitive trails his pioneer father traveled. He has his cotton weighed by the public weigher on scales that are officially correct. During the afternoon, before returning home, he calls on his widowed sister, whose rights are made secure against violence by the protecting law and order of the day; he applies

to the courts for redress against some unfairness from an insurance company; and he telephones to the State Orphans' Home that is caring for two destitute children of a former friend of his. At every turn through the day friend Brown is face to face with the services his government is rendering him.

Conscious recognition of what the government is doing for them makes better citizens of neighbor Cox and friend Brown. Neighbor Cox contributes his proportional part of the tax for the support of his government and does it ungrudgingly. He was an active factor in getting the city government changed from the old ward-aldermanic plan to the commission plan. Friend Brown is using his influence with the electorate at Viola to have capable men put into state and county offices. Personally, he does not like the present road commissioner, but he voted for him because he knows he is honest and understands scientific road-building. Efficiency and honesty are the major requirements of those for whom he casts his vote and influence. He never helps promote a man to office merely because he happens to be a good fellow or an old friend. He regards the interests of the public as a thousandfold more sacred than the political ambitions of even his best friend.

Teachers of civics and writers of civics texts must get a new point of view. They must teach government in the light of what it is doing. The study of its structure and of what it aims to do is insufficient. Lessons on the Constitution are not getting close enough to home. The activities of the local units of government at Birmingham, Podunk and Centerville are of more immediate interest.

2. **The Half-Patriotic Citizen.**—Good men and good citizens are not synonymous. Many good men are very poor citizens. One moderately good man moved his funds from an Austin bank to the village of Rockdale to avoid the payment of city taxes. The city has paved the streets and keeps them swept and sprinkled for his comfort. He sends his children to the city schools. On evenings he attends free lectures in the school auditorium and free concerts in the city park. He uses city water and city lights. He accepts and enjoys the refining atmosphere of a delightful civilization. But he declines to pay his part of the bills. He is a scab on the body politic, and his more thoughtful neighbors silently regard him with loathing disgust. Were he aware of the smallness of his shriveled soul and the low esteem in which he is held by observing, thinking people, he would not make false

renditions of his personal property by hiding away vendor's lien notes, bonds and bank accounts when the tax assessor calls to see him. Had he known how all the best people felt toward him, he would have contributed to the Red Cross and subscribed punctually for his quota of liberty bonds instead of lagging behind, as he did, thinking, "Maybe I shall get by unobserved," until one day he was called before the committee and the reasons demanded for his unpatriotic indifference. Then he gave a small pittance to the Red Cross and bought bonds sparingly merely to avoid being branded a slacker. Still, he is no bad man, as present-day moral standards go. He belongs to the church, attends to his own affairs, meets his business obligations when they come due, and provides liberally for his family.

But the covetous man is not the only poor citizen within the ranks of moderately good people. There are the careless fellows. One of them butchered a hog and allowed the blood and offal to be thrown into the lake, which is the city's source of water supply. Schoolboys throw their left-over fish bait into the water to putrefy and pollute it, and picnic parties take boat excursions up the lake and cast the remnants of their luncheon overboard without a word of protest from the chaperons. The man who

saw the contractor cheating the county by putting an inferior grade of cement into the construction of a culvert did not report it to the civil authorities. A heavy rain washed the dirt off the clay tiling in a gulley near a farmer's house and he saw it every day, but he did not inform the road commissioner about it until long after the weight of passing traffic had so damaged the tiling that it was a total loss to the county. A teacher and three country school trustees have permitted the school's library books to be carried away and the school furniture to be damaged by campers and interlopers because they have neglected keeping the schoolhouse doors locked. A county home for the indigent is wreaking with filth and vermin, but no one seeks to have it remedied. Prisoners are stricken with tuberculosis in a dark unventilated jail and are underfed by the one who has contracted with the county to board them, but citizen Jones, a good man, who knows about it, sits by and says nothing. And so the instances of civic carelessness and negligence might be extended indefinitely.

Why all this civic unconcern? How may it be corrected. I think that the fault is partly that of the public schools and must be corrected in part through them. The twentieth-century public

schools, both rural and urban, must concern themselves more deeply with the production of a vigilant, useful citizenry. Our nation is passing through one of the most critical periods in its history. If it is made safe for democracy, the public school must do it.

We have those rankling in our midst who regard law and government as their worst enemy. Many low-bred foreigners have poured into our land. The only government that they knew was a government of repression. They brought that conception with them and have retained it. To them, freedom means freedom from restraint. They are incapable of regarding government as a helpful, uplifting force. Worse still, among many of the native-born in our Southland there still lives the obsolete doctrine that the government that governs least governs best. The old idea of government as a restricting force must be overcome. The sheriff and the policeman are not my enemies, but my friends and protectors. The jail is not a public monument to excite fear in me, but a place to retain the mad man who would do me violence on the street and the criminal who wantonly breaks the laws made for my protection. Our people must be given a different conception of the significance of government to them.

3. **Good Citizens Must Be Thrifty Citizens.**— A teacher sent a pair of his cast-off shoes to the repair shop for new soles and new heels. His ill-shaped hat went to the hatter the same day for re-blocking and a new band. They were returned almost as good as new. He wore them to school and made them the subject of his semi-weekly thrift talk. In part, he said: "The world's stock of manufactured goods was badly depleted during the war. There are possibly fewer pairs of men's shoes in the world to-day than ever before in my lifetime. The same thing is likely true of men's hats, civilian suits, and many of the other standard necessities of life. Scarcity has made them all high-priced. This rehabilitated hat and pair of shoes saved me the expenditure of nearly twenty dollars. But that is not the biggest thing. Now it is not necessary for me to go draw out one new hat and one new pair of shoes from the world's supply. I have left them on the shelves at the hat store and the shoe store for other people. In reality, I have added one hat and one pair of shoes to the world's supply of hats and shoes. If five million men would do that to-morrow, there would be five million more wearable hats and pairs of shoes in the world. That would tend to bring down the prices of hats and shoes. The

more there is of a commodity, the lower its price. If we would fight the high cost of living effectively and put prices on the downward trend, we must do it by producing and saving. This is no time for idleness and wastefulness. The world is hungry and half clad. There is work for all hands to do."

His pupils saw the point. It was no trouble to organize a thrift society. They went in for economy and saving. Most of them have since opened small bank-accounts. Some of them have pigs, calves and small flocks of poultry to call their own. Others sell papers, mow lawns and do messenger service after school that they may add to their savings accounts. They are all making a great fight on extravagance and wastefulness.

It is hard for the penniless man to be a valuable citizen. It is almost as difficult for the prodigal child of wealth. Mendicancy and lavish opulence are contrary to the spirit of democracy. The almstaker and the spendthrift have no place in our social order. Both should be taught the lessons of frugality and industry. The American's mania for spending money is a dangerous thing. It is a disease afflicting tramp and millionaire alike. There is serious need for practical instruction in thrift and economy.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Is the Constitution of the United States an interesting subject of study for the average pupil below college rank? To which will the average pupil respond with the greater interest: a study of governmental structure or a study of what the government is actually accomplishing for his benefit? Make a list of fifty helpful things your government is doing for you to-day. If your pupils and patrons had an adequate conception of what the government is doing for them, would it make better citizens of them? Would it cause them to take a more active interest in having capable persons put into office? Which candidates did you vote for in the last election, those who were your close personal friends or those best qualified to hold the offices they sought?

2. Is it possible for a man to be a good man and a poor citizen? Do you know any persons who have evaded the payment of their taxes by hiding away certain portions of their wealth from the tax assessor? At heart, are they patriots or slackers? Give instances of individuals guilty of civic carelessness. Are there any marks of civic neglect about your school premises or in the interior of your school building? Do your pupils regard government as a restraining agency or as a helpful, uplifting force? Do you have any pupils whose parents are foreign-born and un-American in spirit?

3. How will economy and production tend to restore the present high prices to their pre-war levels? Is thriftlessness compatible with good citizenship? Are you trying to teach lessons of thrift and industry in your school?

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## CHAPTER VIII

### The Community Idea in Public Education

1. **The Public School's New Perspective.**— When the data is all in and the last chapter in the history of American education has been written, the advent of the community idea in the first half of the twentieth century will mark the beginning of one of its greatest epochs. The free school of the future will recognize Public Opportunity as the inseparable handmaid and companion of scholarship. It will be as generous in its opportunities to the industrial masses as to those aspiring to college graduation and professional careers. Those children turned back into the great army of industrial workers will be given an equal chance with those interested in the gentler callings of life.

Most of the free schools of the past have granted free tuition rather than free and equal opportunity to all in attendance. In traditions and habits they have been the unfortunate victims of the colleges and academies from which most of their ideals and methods of instruction have descended. The first of the American colleges were organized and dedi-

cated to learning. They stood for scholarship and for the preparation of young men for the liberal professions: law, medicine, politics and the ministry. When the privileges of education were more generally extended and the public free schools began to develop, much was taken into their programs of study from the academies and colleges. And many of the public schools have never been able to break away from those old examples. Notwithstanding all the recent efforts to the contrary, they continue to educate just as though all their pupils were headed straight for the colleges and the professions. The university degree, the teacher's certificate, and the doctor's diploma symbolize the kind of education dealt in by many public school-teachers not yet enjoying the broader vision that the idea of community service gives.

The community-service school has a new educational perspective. In its picture of life's opportunities domestic and industrial usefulness are given a place of prominence and beauty by the side of the distant goal of success dedicated to the recondite professions. To the many not inclined to scholastic thought or desirous of professional attainments it will point out the way of usefulness, contentment and efficiency in the community where they reside,

by teaching them better how to live and how to put their productive talents to profitable use. For the few with exceptional abilities it will provide adequate opportunities, encouraging them at all times to finish their educations and, when possible, return from college and cast their lots for a life of usefulness among the home people.

A young man almost ready to graduate from college was asked what he meant to do after completing the course. "I'm going home and run for office," was his prompt reply. After his questioner had rebuked him good-naturedly, he said: "Yes, but you do not understand me. I have seen a great many things the last two or three years. I have not been in any of the professions, but I have been pretty close to some of them. I have never been to the top in anything, but I have been to where I could see the top. And don't you know, I have just about decided that the biggest thing left in life for the college young man of average ability is to go back home and run for the office of good citizen. I mean to go back to my home people and possibly be elected to some minor office: school trustee, road overseer, Sunday-school superintendent, or maybe foreman of the grand jury. In short, I want to go back home and be a leader and benefactor among

my people. I want my house and my barns to be models of comfort and beauty. I want them to be object lessons for others. And I want the best live stock and the best field crops that can be produced anywhere, to be found on my place."

A generation of young men like this young fellow would afford our nation a body of educators, statesmen and social reformers much greater and more capable than it has thus far been able to produce. The rural South needs one hundred thousand like him to-day. He is at present a practical statesman in the affairs of his home community. This laboratory practise in that thrifty little center is giving him an unerring insight into yet broader fields of public welfare. He is doing his post-graduate work in constructive philanthropy among the people where he grew up. Indeed, his concepts of public usefulness were first acquired in the village school at home before he went away to college.

This small school with its program of public opportunity and community service points with pride to the number of men and women of usefulness and good influence it has been able to develop and retain at home to help make that community a better place for people to live. When a young man full of promise and endowed with good ability leaves the

community not to return, his going is looked on as a serious and irreparable loss. The principal of the school contends that there are opportunities at home just as attractive as those abroad and that it is the duty of the school to point the way to them. And when it fails to do so, discontentment is sure to arise in the minds of the most ambitious young people.

This man often deplores the gage of success set by so many superintendents who do but little more than graduate pupils by preparing them for college entrance and then congratulating themselves on what they have done. They keep long rosters of their pupils who have gone to the university and made teachers, lawyers, doctors and civil engineers, but lose sight of those valuable private citizens who have been equally successful as mechanics, farmers and stockmen despite the lack of encouragement given them by the schools they attended. In the new school, whose chief desire is community service and opportunity for all, the teacher will not evaluate his success by the number of pupils sent into the professions so much as by the number who are playing a man's part in the home township. His greatest pride will center around those successful persons he has inspired to find a satisfactory life-work at home, rather than around those he has directed into other adventures.

When that day comes, the South will not suffer for want of capable leaders, nor will our institutions of higher learning be at a loss for want of desirable human material for their student bodies. In fact, the students from this new type of school will be older and far more substantial in their purposes and ideals than the immature young group now inherited each year from the present system of high schools.

2. **Redirected Instruction in the Common Subjects.**—In all subjects the instruction given will be more closely related to the practical duties of life. It will be simple, concrete and practical, rather than abstract, technical and mysterious. It will touch life as the average pupil knows it. Pupils will be taught how to get along in the world, and they will remain in school longer for that reason. There will be a noticeable reduction in the number of discouraged ones leaving school fitted for nothing in particular.

In arithmetic the problems of measurement and business accounting will be taught so as to apply to the problems of the farm. The farmer boy who knows how to calculate the whole cost of producing a fat hog, a bale of cotton, or a bushel of peanuts can hardly be found to-day. The farmer who can tell you how much he made last year is the very

rarest exception indeed. Housewives are equally as ignorant of the principles of household accounting. But the new school will have more to do with the costs of menus, the expense of maintaining the work animals on the farm, and the profits paid by the dairy cows and the poultry yard.

In physiology and hygiene the lessons will have much to do with food values, home sanitation, and properly balanced rations for the family and for the farm animals. The proper housing and feeding of calves, colts, pigs and chickens will be closely correlated with the lessons on ventilation and dietetics. The screens, the kitchen sink, the proper handling of milk and butter, the sterilizing power of direct sunlight, and the value of the sleeping porch will not be overlooked. The eyes of the instructors will be on the homes and the environment of the pupils. The lessons, demonstrations and analogies will cause many new improvements, making farm homes more comfortable places in which to live. The new instruction in physiology will influence the living habits of people, whereas the study of human anatomy and the imaginary conceptions of the forms and functions of a few bones and the organs of the body have practically failed in the past.

History will have less to do with wars, battles,

generals and presidents, none of which the pupils have ever seen, and more to do with current events, and the local affairs of the school district, the county and the state. Language and general science will be so correlated that each will give an additional interest to the other, and both will be given new powers for the improvement of the habits of thought and speech among the pupils.

3. **The Public School Exists for People of All Ages.**—Education in the past has dealt almost exclusively with the individual and with the scholastic group. Just there the American elementary and secondary schools have fallen short. It is a fallacious idea that one's education is complete as soon as his school-days are over. The new school provides for the people of all ages. It is a continuation school for the social and mental improvement of pupils, parents and grown young people. It is reaching those not in school through the farmers' club, lyceum, community fair and various other educational agencies.

The new school is giving much attention to the art and science of housekeeping. Modern household equipment has made scientific training for housekeeping necessary. The fireless cooker, the dustless sweeper, the refrigerator, the oil stove, the

kitchen sink, bath tub and septic tank require scientific intelligence on the part of the housekeeper. This intelligence dignifies the idea of home. Joined with the right appreciation of the artistic and the beautiful, it serves to make a home a home instead of a mere place of residence. Better homes always mean much for community life of a higher order. Decent homes are essential to decent citizenship.

4. **The New School Will Have a New Teacher.** —Confining the work of education to groups of immature children has been conducive to unpardonable academic narrowness on the part of many teachers. It has caused many men and women in the school-room to deteriorate into petty disciplinarians and dogmatic text-book interpreters. But the advent of the community-service idea in education marks the beginning of a new era in educational practises. The social, cultural and industrial wants of the community are being committed more and more to the guardianship of the school. This is calling for courageous initiative and decisive leadership from the ranks of the teachers. It is generating a new type of teacher. This new teacher has the combined abilities of "community manager," "social engineer" and educator. Our normal schools and universities, naturally conservative, must wake up

and hear the country's call for this type of teacher. They have turned out too many academic weaklings in the past who can not measure up to the tests and practical requirements of this new day.

5. **The New School Will Have the Moral and Financial Support of the People.**—The complaint is often made that the public schools are not properly supported. In many instances this is very true. But it is equally as true that some of them are supported as well as they deserve to be. Considering the character of service rendered, it is astounding that many of our public schools are supported as well as they are. We can not expect the support given the school by the home and the community to be in a greater degree than the service rendered by the school to them. When our schools come to concern themselves more with the every-day affairs of the home and the community, the people will rally more enthusiastically to their aid and maintenance.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Discuss some of the influences the colleges have had on the public schools. Wherein lies the error of regarding the public school as a preparatory school for the college? Which pupils have received the more favors from the public schools, those with college

ambitions or those with domestic and business inclinations? Does free tuition always mean a free and equal opportunity for all the pupils in attendance? If pupils were taught more about how to get along in the world, would they remain in school longer for that reason? Why do so many public school superintendents seem inclined to measure their success by the number of students they have graduated and sent away to college, rather than by the number they have turned back into the home community to lead lives of practical usefulness as valuable private citizens?

2. Have you acquired the habit and the ability of making your instruction in the school subjects simple, concrete and practical, or do you teach in terms that are abstract, technical and foreign to the minds of your pupils? Which do you teach, lessons or books? Distinguish between a teacher and a text-book interpreter.

3. Should the school exist for children only, or for the people of all ages? Why has scientific information become so necessary for modern housekeeping? Distinguish between a home and a place of residence. Should we expect the support given by the home to the school to be in a greater degree than the services rendered by the school to the home?

4. Show that the successful teacher in the large centralized rural school of the twentieth century must have the combined abilities of "community manager," "social engineer" and educator.

5. Why will the new school receive the moral and the financial support of all the people?

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# CHAPTER IX

## Twentieth-Century Salaries For Twentieth-Century Teachers in Rural and Village Communities

Two years ago the best paid principal of a seven-teacher school in Texas received a salary of two thousand dollars, a comfortable home, and the use of thirty acres of good farming land. This was easily the equivalent of a three thousand dollar salary. So far as I know, the best paid principal of a four-teacher school in Texas this year receives a salary of eighteen hundred dollars, a neat five-room bungalow to live in, and the use of ten acres of choice farming land. This is easily the equivalent of a salary of twenty-two hundred and fifty dollars.

I have conducted some research into the question of rural and village teachers' salaries in Texas the last five years. Whenever I have learned of a teacher's receiving a phenomenal salary, I have sought the reasons for it. I have analyzed local conditions and school functions as carefully and scientifically as I could. Some cases I have found

due to highly favorable local conditions. Those, I have not carried into my series of critical observations. For example, the Pharr-San-Juan District in the lower Rio Grande Valley pays the principal three thousand six hundred dollars per year. That is in part the outcome of special advantages enjoyed by that particular locality on the irrigation canals with as rich agricultural land as there is in the world and a very highly aggressive citizenship. But where I have found a case situated in an environment typical of any very considerable portion of the state, I have given it a careful analysis.

1. **A Twentieth-Century Village Teacher.**—The seven-teacher school previously mentioned as paying a salary of two thousand dollars to its principal is located in a sawmill village in East Texas. In the pines of Texas and Louisiana there are scores of villages just like it. And, as a class, I have found no men more loyal in the support of public education than the sawmill owners. They seldom oppose a school tax or decline to supply the school with all the building material necessary at actual cost of production.

When I went to this school to make a critical appraisal of its interests and activities, here are some of the things I found. The principal had been

there four years. He began at a salary of eleven hundred and fifty dollars. Later he received fifteen hundred dollars. At the end of the third year he was tendered an attractive position elsewhere at eighteen hundred dollars. But the home people were unwilling to part with him and raised his salary to two thousand dollars.

One of the first things to attract my attention at this school was the miniature silo. It was filled with good sweet ensilage made from Indian corn grown on the school farm. The boys produced the corn, harvested it and converted it into silage. They had kept careful accounts of the cost of production and knew the feeding value of the finished product.

The school farm contained three acres of land. Part of this land was very rolling and had been beautifully terraced. The beauty of the terraces consisted in their proper location and scientific construction. They were given a drop of one inch to every twenty feet of distance. The members of the agriculture class were as familiar with the uses of the terracing level as they were with the rules of compound numbers in arithmetic. Several of the older boys had laid off the terraces on their fathers' farms with the school terracing level.

The Babcock milk tester was also seeing service. The milk of many of the cows in the community had been tested. It had been discovered that some of them gave milk of a very poor quality. The unprofitable ones were being sold and replaced by better ones. Other articles of equipment in the small agricultural and animal husbandry laboratory were microscopes, soil thermometers, fertilizers, spraying mixtures, seed testers, test-tubes, beakers, balances, etc. This school was intelligently adapting its program of instruction to the industrial needs of that community in a state of transition from the virgin pines to applied agriculture.

A short distance from the main building were two small rooms equipped with ranges, tables and other appliances for teaching the girls home economics. There they received instruction in home sanitation, home beautification, and household accounting. This work gave an effective union of theory and practise in the domestic arts. The girls were not only taught the value of a balanced ration and the principles of menu-making, but they had real practise in the best methods of preparing and serving food.

The school campus consisted of five acres of land well supplied with playground apparatus. Its chief

attractions were swings, giant strides, see-saws, a race course, and courts for tennis, basketball and baseball. The playground, with all its modern accommodations, constituted part of the working equipment of this school just as much as the books the children studied and the seats they occupied. Its purpose was to connect many of the lessons of the class-room with the actual duties and relationships of life in definite practise.

In addition to the industrial instruction and the playground activities were the agencies for social and cultural recreation. Story-telling, music, dramatics and social-center meetings produced an exuberant good fellowship in the community as all-embracing as the very atmosphere itself. The male quartette, choral club, Victrola, dramatic entertainments, piano concerts, and story-tellers' evenings were the sources of profitable, vivacious pastime for the entire population. Socially, the biggest thing in the village was the school and its allied activities.

This school had a real twentieth-century vision of the duties and functions of a public school in a village like that. Its primary purpose was to make valuable citizens and community builders of those in attendance. Its chief concern was with the

ninety per cent. or so of its pupils who will never go to college or enter any of the professions, but will remain, for the most part, among the home-builders and industrial producers of the next generation.

2. **A Twentieth-Century Country Teacher.**— Two years ago I visited the country school taught by the man who was the best paid country teacher in Texas in 1919. During the two days I was there, here are some of the things I learned. A consolidation of three small schools had been made three years prior to my visit. There were one hundred and eight white children in the enlarged district with four teachers employed to instruct them. The country was sparsely settled, and some of the pupils lived as far as seven miles from school. Most of them came to school on horseback, in buggies and in automobiles. One Ford car was operated at public expense for the transporting of pupils to and from school.

At the time of my visit, the school had ten acres of land, six buildings and a windmill. The buildings were the principal's home, a home for the three women teachers, the tool-house, a barn for the horses the children drove and rode to school, the main school building and the auditorium. The

main building is of gray brick. It contains two halls and five class-rooms. The auditorium is a frame building with a capacity of five hundred people.

One and one-half acres of the land were under irrigation, and one and one-fourth acres were devoted to dry-farming projects. The water for irrigation was pumped into the storage tank by the windmill. The land under irrigation was planted to onions and Irish potatoes. Onions are one of the principal money crops of Southwest Texas, where this school is located. It was not known that Irish potatoes could be successfully grown in that frontier locality until demonstrated by the school. I was there in March, 1917. The onions and potatoes were to be harvested in May and the land planted to tepary beans, peanuts and broomcorn. This second crop was to be harvested and followed with fall garden stuff in October. The object was to keep the land producing a crop of some sort throughout the entire year.

The individual plats of onions were forty by sixty feet in size. There were sixteen of them. Some of the best ones made as much as forty dollars' worth of onions. One-half of the net proceeds went to the boys who cultivated them and the other

half to the school. This not only gave the boys practise in the methods of cultivation and the uses of fertilizers, but gave them some very valuable lessons in farm bookkeeping, knowledge greatly needed by most farmers in the South.

Among these individual plats of onions and potatoes you could see good farming and poor farming very sharply contrasted. Some of them were the evident products of slovenliness and lack of industry. You did not have to travel all over the entire community to gather examples of successful and unsuccessful farming. Every degree of success and failure, from the best to the worst, was concentrated on the school farm. The causes for each were well-known. The object lesson was a most forceful one. It meant as much to the community at large as it did to the school. In fact, its purpose was to benefit the community.

During the previous four years this small school farm had given a powerful impetus to home gardening among the patrons of the school. It had demonstrated what could be done at home with a windmill and a small plat of ground down in that semi-arid portion of the state where windmills are a universal farm and ranch appliance. The plan then was to set aside a small area of the school

land for berries and vegetables and make it a practical working model for an all-the-year-round home garden.

The unirrigated plat of land was devoted to dry-farming projects. Fall breaking, dust mulching and conservation of moisture were being practised.

Some of the industrial projects at home were as interesting and as valuable as the school projects. Eight boys had produced two thousand pounds of pork at a cost of three and one-half cents per pound. Four champion "baby" beeves had been grown by the schoolboys.

This school also recognized that industrial education was as necessary for its girls as for its boys. A more competent generation of farmers would be unfortunate without a more competent generation of farmers' wives to assist them. Consequently, a school laboratory for training for efficiency in the home had been equipped and put into use. It contained three sewing-machines, two oil stoves, and numerous minor laboratory accessories. Here it was that the girls made their graduating dresses, and were taught many valuable lessons in household accounting, food preparation and home sanitation. They were given credit for making their graduating dresses and the costumes for the cantata at the

close of school the same as for the rest of their school work. Indeed, they were graded on their sewing and on the fitting of garments just as critically as they were graded on their lessons in history and in English composition.

While the school was actively identifying itself with the industrial needs of its patrons, it had made itself equally as responsive to their social and recreational needs. The auditorium was the community's playhouse. The school, being in the open country and fifteen miles from the railroad, was obligated all the more bindingly to provide a modicum of social recreation for these young people and their parents. The male quartette, Victrola concerts, plays, drills, stories and informal social gatherings contributed to this end. Through the Victrola the pupils had heard the voices of President Wilson and Premier Lloyd George. They had heard most of the great artists of the world sing and play. Gluck, McCormick and Kreisler were among their favorites.

Why this remarkable school in that particular section of the thorns and cacti of Southwest Texas? It was due to no large concentration of wealth or other specially favored conditions. In topography, population and industry the locality is

typical of most of the country in that vast frontier empire extending from San Antonio to Del Rio, Brownsville and Corpus Christi. The success of this school is attributable in the main to the vision and energies of one man—the principal of the school.

This man taught for several years in the small-town schools of the state. But he saw a more desirable opportunity in the country. He went to the country to be an active rural-life leader and community-builder. He has succeeded in what he set out to do.

Our Southland could use twenty thousand teachers like this man. But leaders with the clear vision of rural needs and rural possibilities, and with the engaging personality that compels people to follow, are seldom found among the country teachers of to-day. And most distressing of all, we can not hope for any considerable number of them in the near future to come from our institutions of higher learning, both church and state, now engaged in the business of training teachers. Before these institutions can impart the vision of present-day rural possibilities to others, they themselves must first get the vision and grant it a fair chance to function in their curricula.

3. **The Threefold Function of Rural and Village Schools in the Twentieth Century.**—If I correctly interpret the rural and village schools that are satisfying the public best and receiving the most liberal and loyal support from the public in return, their activities center around three definite groups of interests: viz., academic interests, industrial interests, and social and recreational interests. Whereas the school of yesterday was primarily academic in its aim and its course of study, the new school is all that and much more. It ministers to all the vital needs of the community. The new teacher is the social and industrial light as well as the intellectual light among the people he serves. He is far bigger and broader than the wizened pedagogue saturated with the usual stock of academic facts and ideals acquired at college.

For men and women with the education and aptitude for discovering and meeting cultural, recreational and industrial needs in the country, there is a most enviable opportunity in the South to-day. It is an opportunity for the person who knows "how to work in the open where the people are" and elucidate truth in terms familiar to them. It is an extremely vital field of educational endeavor for the person with an acute social sense and the

faculty of doing things with zeal and with enthusiasm.

Born of necessity, the demands of the twentieth century will raise up a new type of teacher. This new teacher will establish a more vital contact between intellectual achievement and industrial and social training. He will refuse to "sit tight" in the class-room while life, industry and action beckon from the outside. He will align his services more closely with the lives and needs of his people, and they will respect him and compensate him liberally for it.

4. **The Fundamental Reason for Starvation Salaries for Country Teachers.**—A county superintendent took me to what he said was the "most forward-looking four-teacher school" in his county. After a lad of fifteen had finished telling me about milk testing, egg testing, infertile eggs, farm terracing and how to calculate the capacity of a silo, he told me about some of the things back at home. He said: "Why, don't you know, Dad nearly had fits when they voted the school tax here four years ago. He quit his work to fight the election for a whole week, and the ridin' he gave his ole mule hurt it worse 'an any week's work it got all summer. But Dad's for the school now. He's out with another fellow to-day tryin' to raise money so

school can go on another month longer. He thinks the new school is worth the price."

And that school was worth the price. All the people in the community knew it. I am convinced that our country people as a whole are not averse to remunerating teachers liberally when they see they are worth the pay. The principals and the teachers of the two schools I have mentioned were paid handsome salaries because the people believed in the sort of education they stood for. I could give other examples of the same kind. But the average rural school of to-day with its trite academic lore is far less appealing to the average layman. He regards it with indifference. He supports it reluctantly. In the light of these facts, I have been driven to this discomforting conclusion: *The consuming public is now paying just about as much as it ever will pay for the sort of product the average public school is putting on the market.* Salaries will be advanced when the product is improved. Until then, I see no hope for any very substantial raise. Raising tax rates and property valuations is merely scratching on the surface of the issue. That will help some, but it will not correct the fundamental evil. The schools themselves must have a rebirth. The people will foot the bills when they see that the returns justify the outlay.

I left the public school when I was fourteen years old. I could not see that what went on there was worth my time. I am still not quite sure but that I was right about it. If I had it to do over, I suspect that I should do the same thing again. Every year thousands of boys do just as I did. One of the most distressing things about our country schools is that they are filled with little boys and little girls. The big boys and big girls have deserted them. Their lack of interest is contagious. It spreads to parents and patrons. It generates half-hearted school support. But the redirected school is retaining a larger percentage of older pupils. It is doing it by teaching more of those things and championing more of those interests and activities that have a direct bearing on life.

The public school said to me: "Take this. You need it. It will be good for you." I was not consulted. Neither were my parents nor our neighbors. So I conjugated verbs, memorized long lists of dates, learned the names of most of the bones in the human skeleton, taxed my young mind with a great deal of other semi-useless information, and supposed that I was being educated. But in time I grew skeptical about it. The relationship between all these things and the road to success and a life of useful-

ness was too vague and nebulous for my youthful acceptance. One fine morning I revolted and did not go to school. I now recall that most of my contemporaries in school in that unpretentious country community did just about as I did. And the tragedy of it is that their interests in education seem to have been permanently dampened. Only one of the entire number is an active school worker to-day. This one is cashier in the bank and president of the school board in a village of one thousand population. I spent a night in his home not long ago. He said to me: "All the teachers in our school are either normal-school graduates or college graduates, but they are missing the mark of our needs. Most of the instruction they give my children is formal as can be, and, I fear, not worth very much after all. I think a great deal of it is just about as wasteful of their time as the studies of Greek and higher mathematics were to me the three years I was in college." Why the bad taste in this intelligent man's mouth? Will he vote for a liberal increase in the salaries of those teachers next year?

The purchasing public likes up-to-date goods. It pays liberally for attractive articles that can be used to practical advantage. But the finished products of our normal schools are very poor sellers.

Surely they are not meeting the tastes and cheerful approval of the public, else they would bring better prices. To say the least, there is an under-production of men like the two well-paid principals I have mentioned. The dies and lasts of our normal schools and university departments of education are turning out very few of their kind. These archaic institutions are in dire need of new machinery and modern equipment for that purpose. They would do well to make room for it.

Tracing the causes of the small salaries for teachers to their ultimate sources, I am persuaded that no small portion of them reside in the very conservative practises of our institutions of higher learning engaged in the business of training teachers. Before our rural and village schools can be substantially reformed and given a generation of teachers who have seen the new light, a reform must first come in the conservative lives of our institutions higher up.

5. **An Overlooked Opportunity.**—One of the teacher's best opportunities for service and financial remuneration in the entire public school system is in our better rural and village agricultural communities. It is an overlooked opportunity that has been seen by only a few men and women of fore-

sight and educational vision far in advance of the accepted school-room practises of our day. For the teacher who is fully as big as the job, it is an opportunity far more desirable in many ways than the average high-school position in town, so eagerly sought by many teachers. I have had this statement most disparagingly challenged by a few prominent educators on more than one occasion, but their challenge does not lessen its validity. The teacher's opportunity in the best rural and village districts is one to which many of our educators, and some very prominent ones, too, are deaf, dumb and blind.

Lingleville, Texas, is an average country village with two hundred people and a four-teacher school. I believe that I could make that place build me a home and pay me a salary of two thousand dollars in three years' time. But I could not do it with the sort of school I taught when I was principal there twelve years ago. I received seventy-five dollars per month then. I think that was about all I was worth. I gave them a very good school, as schools ordinarily go. It was the only sort of school I had ever been taught to teach. Of course, it was stereotyped and conventional. But the reasons for its flimsy adaptation to the needs of that place were

not my fault. They were the faults of the school that taught me. That school gave me my benighted point of view before I received my diploma and certificate to teach.

Four years of the usual academic regimen at college seldom makes a rural-life leader. It more commonly leaves the graduate in conventional ruts from which he never extricates himself. Most of the small number of rural-life leaders we do have might well be termed accidental and sporadic, having acquired their points of view after they left college. Knowing the subject usually included in the college curriculum may help one in the technical mastery of a profession, but it does little to stimulate the latent germs of leadership, or to set advanced educational practises into motion. The captaincy of a football team, the office of Boy Scout Master, or the foremanship of a West-Texas ranch is worth far more as a developer of the initiative, the concepts and the personality one must have to be a leader of men and a practical interpreter of life in action.

Rural-life courses should be among the most attractive courses in the normal-school curriculum. With the proper encouragement they would be. If they were, young men and young women of talent

would be attracted to them to make rural uplift their life-work. In Denmark the directing and coordinating of rural activities has become a profession. Rural-life reformers are numbered among the greatest men of the nation. The same field of educational endeavor is open to the best talent of the South to-day. But it still remains for our southern educators to exploit in the manner that the Danes have done.

6. **Our Conservative Institutions of Higher Learning.**—Prior to the Civil War there were a great many academies in the South. They were attended, for the most part, by the sons of the wealthy plantation owners. These academies prepared boys for college entrance, and the colleges later prepared them for politics and for the professions. With the Civil War and the freeing of the slaves came the bankruptcy of most of the plantation owners. Following their bankruptcy came the gradual closing of the doors of most of the academies and the corresponding extension of free-school privileges to all the children of the land. For the want of a better working model, the developing free schools copied many of the educational practises of the academies and went on educating just as though every child in attendance would stay

till graduation day, then go away to college and ultimately become a doctor, lawyer, politician, or some other professional person. Till this day, our public schools are not entirely free from that ancient ideal. Why?

This last spring I attended five high-school graduating exercises. I heard the speeches of valedictorians and the papers read by class prophets. I heard it prophesied that twenty years hence one member of a class would be an opulent Wall-Street banker; another the president of a prosperous oil company with offices in some far-away city; another a world-renowned surgeon; still another a college president; and yet others governors, congressmen and senators. But not one time did I hear it prophesied that twenty years hence some boy or some girl would be the leading person in all the home community, helping to better the highways of life traveled by the average citizen. The enlightenment of the great motley throng and the welfare of the busy industrial ranks were things unmentioned. Affluence and honorable position were the manifest goals of their youthful desires. Their interest in collective betterment was no match for their craving for personal advancement.

High-school graduates usually reflect the ideals

of their instructors. Their instructors, as a rule, reflect the ideals of the institutions that educated them. Where were the teachers of these high-school graduates educated? Some of them in my own state university, some in the normal schools of my state, and some in the universities and normal schools of other states. Few of these institutions, if any at all, are as seriously concerned as they should be with the humbler callings and with the constructive improvement of the lowly walks of life in our great Southland. They are distressingly slow in overcoming the unyielding precedents of the scholastic past. They are slaves to many of the educational practises of yesterday that bear remotely on the issues of to-day.

Most of our southern population resides in the country. The civilization of the South must be essentially a rural civilization. The educators and statesmen of this generation and the next will have to battle mainly with rural issues. Our institutions of higher learning are under obligations to give them a better training for their duties.

The present indifference of our southern institutions of higher learning toward rural issues is tantamount to short-sighted statesmanship on their part. They are dependent, in the main, upon rural

constituencies for their financial support. Most of them go before the legislatures, predominantly rural in their personnel, every two years and bow down like begging mendicants for revenues for the coming biennium. It is absurd to expect the financial and moral support given to our institutions of higher learning by rural people and their representatives to be in a greater ratio than the services rendered them by these institutions.

There is abundant ground for the complaint that rural-life courses are not getting their share of attention. And there is also abundant justification for the charge that most of the very few rural-life courses now being offered are mere makeshifts not well adapted to present-day needs in the South. For example, as a student in the University of Texas eight years ago, I enrolled for a course in rural economics. What did I get? An instructor not at all familiar with rural conditions in Texas, a text written by a Harvard professor, and some parallel reading assignments of a very general nature. I got almost no direct light on the existing rural problems of my state. I finished that course in disappointment, feeling that I was very little better prepared for grappling with the question of production, transportation, marketing and rural

finance now confronting us and demanding constructive reform than I was before reading the assignments and taking notes on the lectures given in that course. But the failure of the course was not the fault of the instructor who gave it. It was due to a handicap under which he labored. He could not make the course immediately applicable to Texas when the necessary data fresh from the source in Texas was not at hand. The task of gathering it and putting it into usable form was too great for any one person and no institution in the state had ever made any very serious attempt to do it. Thus it is. Courses in rural economics, rural sociology and rural education can never meet the practical requirements of our day until some institution comes to their aid and does the necessary research work and collecting of data that new texts may be written and the contents of the courses made rich and attractive. Without an abundance of concrete facts, well organized and bearing directly upon our southern rural problems, rural-life courses can never be given with the greatest practical worth to those who take them.

Our institutions of higher learning are slow to make changes in their curricula and equally as slow to make needed additions to them. Some of them

have venerable departments quite antagonistic to innovations. When a new subject knocks on the door and asks for admission into the academic household, some of these older members of the family, hoary with age, promptly challenge all its rights as though its adoption might expose them to the dangers of ultimate disinheritance. A new subject has to fight for recognition. It also has to show just cause for fighting. There are many reasons why rural-life courses should be entitled to a more liberal recognition. Every state institution of higher learning in the South should have a Department of Rural Life. But it is difficult for these institutions to reform themselves from within. They can not overcome the momentum of their own conservatism. Aggressive assistance is needed from without. The pressure of enlightened public sentiment can do much in helping take this formidable trench in the warfare of academic reform. Insistent demands from public school-teachers and wide-awake laymen will be of inestimable value to some of our institutions of higher learning in the laudable work of putting their own houses in better order.

7. **The Ultimate Remedy.**—Some day our normal schools, colleges and universities will hear the

suppliant call of the country community. They will grasp its meaning with sympathy and understanding. That will be the dawn of the morning of a new epoch in rural community welfare. It will mark the beginning of the reorganization and redirecting of our normal schools.

The rehabilitated normal school will have a new curriculum. It will be strong in the social-science and the life-science groups of study. Some of the obsolete subjects handed down by tradition and rigidly required for graduation may be omitted entirely. Its purpose will be to produce a generation of graduates who know how to teach people to keep healthy, live comfortably and be happy. This will require more lessons on food, clothing, personal hygiene, sanitation, general science, household conveniences, home beautification, thrift, recreation, citizenship, leadership, rural sociology, community civics, group psychology, country life, community cooperation, business accounting, rural economics, farm crops, farm animals and other subjects bearing immediately on the welfare of the individual, the home and the community.

Concurrent with the reform of the normal-school curriculum will be a reform in the normal-school faculty. The intolerant stand-patter and the hide-

bound conservative will either have to yield to more liberal policies or be permanently cast upon the professional junk heap as decadent relics of the days gone by. And many of the teachers of the new subjects will have to get better points of view. Some of them do not know enough about country life. They have heard a great deal about it, they have taken standard college courses treating of it, and they have often gazed upon the rural landscape with the deepest thrills of admiration; but they have never tasted of country life, deeply, intimately and understandingly. A true knowledge of the deliciousness of ice-cream can not be acquired from reading about it.

Then, again, there are some instructors in the rural social sciences who were born and reared in the country, but who have been away from the country so long that they have lost much of their rural understanding. They do not seem to realize that it is essential for them to go back to the country a few weeks every year, away out where the real American peasants are, in order to keep from forgetting some of the things about which they already know. Besides that, country customs are changing all the time. The vapors from the country store, the way country people live, the things they eat, what

they wear and what they talk about are not just as they were yesterday. The successful teacher of the rural social sciences in the future will do much of his most profitable post-graduate study out where the country people are, living among them, eating with them, talking with them, and ever reacquainting himself with their side of life.

When the day of the rehabilitated normal school comes and a generation of graduates that has seen the new light is directed toward the beckoning opportunities in the better types of our rural and village communities instead of toward the host of mediocre positions in our town and city high schools, I confidently anticipate an automatic, upward revision in the schedule of teachers' salaries.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. There are scores of sawmill villages in the South like the one mentioned in this chapter, but very few of them pay their teachers as well as this one. Give some of the causes for this.

2. One man said the reason for there being so few rural schools in Southwest Texas like the one mentioned in this chapter is that there are so few communities like the one supporting that school. Another one said, "No, there are many communities just as rich in educational possibilities as that one, but the reason for so few schools like that one is the great

dearth of teachers with the wisdom and the insight to organize and develop them." Who was right?

3. Define the threefold function of rural and village schools in the twentieth century.

4. Give some of the causes for poor salaries for teachers. Account for the indifference of the average layman toward the sort of education offered by the average public school. Will the public pay better salaries to teachers when the character of the service rendered by the free schools to the general public is improved? Why do most country boys drop out of school before they reach the high-school grades? What would be the effect on their attendance if the work of the schools were made more practical and allied more closely with their interests and life needs and with all the normal activities of the community?

5. Why have most of our educators and most of our normal schools and colleges overlooked the opportunity for leadership and for attractive salaries for capable teachers in the better types of our rural and village communities? Which position would you prefer: the superintendency of a village school like the one mentioned in this chapter, or the principalship of a high school in the average town of five thousand population?

6. Why does a teacher with no other interests than academic interests so seldom achieve distinction as a community leader? Why are there so few teachers and community leaders like the principals of the two schools mentioned in this chapter? Would we have more of them if our normal schools were more deeply concerned in the production of their kind? Why have our institutions of higher learning in the South paid

so little attention to the production of rural-life leaders? Show that the civilization of the South must be essentially a rural civilization. Would young men and young women of talent enroll for rural-life courses and make rural education and rural community leadership their life-work if such courses were properly encouraged by our normal schools?

7. What is meant by the statement, "The rehabilitated normal-school curriculum will be strong in the social-science and the life-science groups of study"? Which is of greater value to the average rural or village teacher, a course in practical rural sociology or a course in plane trigonometry? Describe an ideal instructor for the rural social sciences in a normal school. Why is it so essential that he keep up his relationships and acquaintance with rural people and rural institutions by frequent visits to the country?

## CHAPTER X

### School Taxes in Country Districts

I have assisted in many school-tax elections and school-bond elections. In this chapter I shall mention some of the difficulties to be reckoned with and some of the methods and arguments I have seen used to best advantage in school-tax campaigns among country people. And permit me to say that simplicity and concreteness are two of the cardinal notes of success in treating any subject before a rural audience.

1. **Methods of Public Appeal.**—Sometimes it is best to conduct a school-tax campaign by a well-organized system of personal interviews. At other times it is best to supplement this campaign of individual solicitations with one or more public meetings. At these public rallies I have observed that the most successful campaigners usually employ a combination of reason, sentiment, humor and sarcasm in their discussions.

(a) **Reason.**—Sound logic carries with it an acceptable dignity that is respected by some people who would resent a purely sentimental appeal. And

these are usually the people whose opinions and influence are worth the most in shaping the affairs of a community. It is best to address them in the language of reason.

(b) **Sentiment.**—There are many people whose actions are influenced more by sentiment than by the higher thought processes. Unfortunately for democracy, they sometimes constitute the balance of power or even the majority in a voting precinct. The successful campaigner must always be mindful of them. They are in every rural audience that assembles.

These people must be addressed and importuned through the channels of emotion. Levity and pathos are as essential as logic in shaping their attitudes and courses of action. Argument must be replete with emotional richness and concrete simplicity to accommodate their unskilled habits of thought. For instance, a man from a university faculty was one time assisting a county superintendent in a very backward county, pleading for better schools for country children. An obstinate old layman opposed to modern progress resented his doctrine and his presence in the home community. For several days prior to this educator's coming he protested among the patrons of the decadent little school: "It is none

of that man's business what sort of school we have out here." He branded him as an interloper and a meddler. Some of the benighted people had sided with him. But at the proper moment on the occasion of the mass meeting set for that community, the speaker made an impassioned plea, saying most persuasively and emphatically: "It is my business what sort of school these children have! When I see them holding up their white hands pleading for an even start with their city competitors in the race of life in this twentieth century, I would be recreant to my duty as a citizen if I did not raise my voice in their behalf. Their blood is just as red and their birthrights are just as precious as those of the whitest children that walk our city streets. They are every bit as good as their more fortunate city cousins. They are entitled to the same advantages. Are they getting them? Will their parents and their adult friends thoughtlessly continue to stand between them and the fortunes of a beckoning future by not voting the funds and equipping a school commensurate with the needs of this new day in the life of our Nation?"

Then the legal form for a tax election was adroitly presented and explained. Every qualified voter present, save one, signed on the dotted lines,

and the next day the election notices were legally posted. Three weeks later the election was held and the tax was carried with only two dissenting votes.

Cold reasoning would have passed above the heads of most of those people. It took reasoning seasoned with the warmth of emotion to move them to action. And by keeping their emotional enthusiasm kindled till election day, the school's financial distress in that community was relieved.

(c) **Sarcasm.**—Sometimes the best way to kill a man's influence is to make a huge joke out of him. He can not carry his point with everybody laughing in his face. For instance, one time there was a tax election pending in a rural district near the town of Taylor, Texas. Two nights before the day of the election an educational rally was held at the schoolhouse. An absentee landlord from Taylor was present. He was bitterly opposed to the tax. He had defeated a tax election the year before by intimidating his tenants. This time he was endeavoring to do it again. So the main speaker of the evening kept him steadily in view. When he had the minds of his hearers properly prepared, he told this story:

"A few weeks ago I saw a man in East Texas who presided over a meeting of anti-school taxpayers. Nine benighted denizens from the back-

woods and forks of the creek met at the old schoolhouse that had seen service for more than forty years to unite their efforts to defeat the school tax in the election ten days later. I wish you could have seen the chairman of that convention. When I saw him he was standing in front of a small grocery store leaning against an iron post eating a hamburger. The hamburger was of the big fifteen-cent variety. I judge the gentleman was hungry, for each bite he took was as big as an ordinary biscuit. He was very gaunt and more than six feet tall. His neck was distressingly long and slender. An immense Adam's apple raced up and down the front side of it in response to each bite of hamburger. On the top end of his neck a small-sized human head was perched. It was bald down to the ears and decorated with a huge wart on its apex. I walked around him three times in amusement. Then I said to myself: 'Old man, of course you would vote against a school tax. You and all your kind will do it every time you get a chance.' And don't you know, ladies and gentlemen, as I came over here this afternoon I met a man in the road who looked almost like that old fellow. I think he lives at Taylor."

The entire audience saw the point. There was a

mighty burst of laughter and applause. Then the story of The Stingiest Man in the World was told, and closed with the aspersion, "I wonder if he lives at Taylor, too." At this juncture the man from Taylor left the house in a rage of anger as the audience applauded uproariously. Then an appeal was made to the manhood of the tenants to come out and stand up for their children in the election two days later. They did, and the tax was carried.

Ordinarily, sarcasm, innuendo and bitter aspersions should be avoided. But there are instances where their use is abundantly justified. There are some enslaved communities that never can be free till the influence of certain remorseless persons oppressing them is killed. "Those whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." There is no surer method for crushing a heartless landlord with small sympathies for education and helpless children. Antagonize him and make him accept the gage of battle out in the open. Show him up and clear away the subterfuges he hides behind. Then if he grows desperate, his destruction is assured. He can not survive the unpopularity of fighting in full view. He will wither in the sunshine of publicity created by his own acts.

But sarcasm is a dangerous weapon in the hands

of the amateur. It is equally as dangerous in the hands of the timid and fearful, and that includes most teachers, for teachers as a tribe are not very courageous. Even when employed by the cleverest of experienced campaigners, it sometimes comes back like a boomerang. But for a man to contend that its use should be dispensed with entirely in rural campaigns, is a *prima facie* admission that he is not well acquainted with the psychology of rural groups.

2. **The School as a Business Investment for the Community.**—In a new and developing community a good school is an exceedingly valuable business asset. It attracts desirable families and enhances property values. Nobody has been more keenly aware of this than the practical land agents and land development companies in Texas the last twenty years.

In one county a wealthy banker with large land-holdings helped build eleven schoolhouses and almost as many churches. One day three men promoting a new church came to him for assistance. They solicited no special sum but expected him to give one hundred dollars. After they had laid the case before him, he said, "If you men will put up a new house, paint it, and finish it in a creditable way, I will furnish the material." And he did furnish it. The

bill was five hundred and ninety-two dollars. That sum purchased no mean amount of pine lumber twenty years ago.

A year later one of the members of this committee returned to this generous banker's office and said to him, "If I could only give as you have given, I should be a happy man." And the banker replied: "But your giving would be quite different from mine. It would be real charity. You would give out of the bigness of your heart. My giving has been practical business. I have given because it paid me to do so. Do not ascribe any of the credit to me for building that church. John Parks and Sam Shaw are the men who did it. They paid the bill. The day the last nail was driven in that house, I raised the price on my two small farms just to the south of it seven hundred dollars and one thousand dollars respectively. Then Parks came and bought one of them and Shaw the other. The church was the advertisement that brought me the purchasers. My contribution to it was a business investment and not a deed of charity. So it has been with most of the schools and churches I have helped build in this county."

In West Texas, in 1907, during the life of C. W. Post, I heard him say: "I mean to develop these two

hundred sections of wild land. I mean to enhance their value and make them desirable property and attractive places for people to live. To do this, good schools and good roads will be necessary. I mean to construct the roads out of my own capital and build comfortable schoolhouses as the people need them."

I watched that colonization project conducted by that great financier until his death in 1914. In some instances land prices advanced from five dollars to sixty dollars per acre. And at no time did this man lose sight of the value of the public schools and the public roads as instruments in the profitable development of his holdings. He regarded them as good investments. As he saw it, the country schoolhouse is a place where charity and business meet. The unwritten rules of good business, as well as the spirit of patriotism, made him an active supporter of public education.

The financing of the public schools and the public roads paid handsome dividends to the millionaire C. W. Post. The new church, previously mentioned, enhanced the values of the farms purchased by John Parks and Sam Shaw, and did the same for every other farm within the radius of its influence. Schools, roads and churches are fine investments in

any new and developing country. And the oldest of the Southern States are still young and immature in point of economic growth. The high plains of West Texas, the coastal plains of South Texas, and the millions of acres of cut-over lands in East Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi are lying in a state of semi-idleness waiting for the prosperous stimulus of better roads, better schools, better churches and more people. Indeed, there are but few counties, if any at all, in the entire South so fully developed that their commercial values would not respond favorably to additional investments in school and road improvements.

3. **The Wealth of the Community Must Support Its Schools.**—Four years ago in the city of San Antonio I obtained a touching story from a Mexican refugee. He was a proud Castilian and had been a man of wealth and affluence in his country prior to the revolution that forced him to flee to Texas for safety.

He said: "In Mexico we have no well-established system of public education. I used to object to the theory of paying taxes for the educating of other people's children. I thought it unjust. It was too much like the requisitioning of private property for the benefit of particular individuals. But when the

enemy came into my plantation and confiscated my entire harvest of wheat, forty thousand sacks then in the field, I had a change of mind. I saw that every acre of land and every bushel of wheat I possessed should be more securely protected. And don't you know, in a democracy, the best protection property can have is the protection of an intelligent ballot. And the only way to guarantee an intelligent ballot is through a system of free public education. When I go back to my country, if I am ever permitted to do so, I shall go on record with what influence I have for a system of free schools supported by a system of *ad valorem* taxes throughout the republic. Mexico must have free schools like America has. It is up to the real and personal property of all the people to foot the bills."

Governmental conditions are better in Texas than in Mexico. Real and personal property values are higher on the north side of the Rio Grande River than on the south side of it. Life, wealth and the pursuit of happiness are infinitely more secure. America is a better place for civilized people to live. Let the man who protests against the payment of taxes for the support of our free schools go to Mexico, where there are no such taxes to pay. In that torn and bleeding republic he belongs. He is

not worthy of the protection of the American flag and the blessings enlightenment brings. He is criminally selfish, dangerously short-sighted and destitute of a high sense of honor. He deserves the odium of a slacker and the contempt of all whose hearts are true to American ideals.

4. **The Inherent Fear of Taxation.**—On a circus day a group of school-boys was crowded around the monkeys' cage. They were feeding the monkeys nuts and bits of fruit. A score of grimacing faces clamored greedily for the food. Appetites were keen, and numerous begging hands and arms were extended for more to eat. Then one of them seized a small paper bag and ran away with it. A half dozen hungry comrades followed in close pursuit. The bag was opened. But horrors! a small striped serpent wiggled out of it, and there was sudden consternation in monkeydom. There were wild frantic leaps to places of safety on the perches in the top of the cage. There were shrill hysterical shrieks and screams distressingly painful. It seemed that some of the monkeys, old and young, would die of fear in spite of all their keeper could do to pacify them.

A week later one of the boys related the incident at school. His teacher heard the story and then gave this explanation. He said: "In some portions of the

tropics where monkeys live in great abundance there are certain arboreal snakes that live almost entirely on them. They have done so for hundreds of generations. They are the monkeys' worst enemies. For that reason most monkeys have an instinctive fear of snakes. This fear is ingrained into their nervous systems from birth. It is so deep-seated that many of them grow frantic at the very sight of a snake."

There are some people who seem to fear the principle of taxation with horrors almost as deep-seated as the monkeys' fear of snakes. They grow frantic every time a new tax is proposed. Their conduct when a local tax election is pending is no less amusing than the conduct of that cage of frightened monkeys. For instance, in 1914, in Nacogdoches County, Texas, one poor old fellow with five children of free school age waged a bitter campaign against the local school tax, contending that the people were already tax-ridden and burdened with tribute-giving beyond the point of endurance. An examination of the tax rolls revealed the fact that his only property listed for taxation was one Jersey cow and the taxes had not been paid on her for three years. In Collin County a man fought a road tax with the same kind of argument when his taxable

wealth consisted of nothing but a cheap Elgin watch and a white English bulldog. Again, in Erath County an old fellow whose tax was only sixty-three cents and whose three children of free school age received benefits from the school tax to the amount of thirty dollars, was the bitterest enemy the school tax had. I might tabulate a long list of extreme cases like these and a much longer list of cases less extreme.

Just how much of this active opposition to local taxes is attributable to the instinct of fear and how much to the instinct of acquisition and the spirit of greed, I am not qualified to say. But after having observed a large number of cases, I am persuaded to believe that more times than not it is an expression of the instinct of fear. It leads one to think that, before the rise and practise of democracy, when the kings and nobles were in the ascendency exacting tribute from the common people for centuries, the pains of oppression left permanent traces of fear and apprehension in the nerves of all the generations of men that have followed. To say the least, with many poorly informed country people in the South to-day taxation and oppression are synonymous.

Yet, most of these poorly informed, semi-illiter-

ate, frantic fighters-of-taxes-in-all-forms are amenable to reason when properly approached. But to approach them effectively and successfully, you must know them. You must know their language, ideals, attitudes, interests, sensibilities and capacities for understanding. Many county superintendents are failing every year because of an imperfect knowledge of the people whom they seek to lead. They could profit much by the little boy's advice to the professor. When the professor could not get a pet dog to jump over a stick for him as it had done for the boy and began showing signs of impatience and exasperation, the boy admonishingly said, "Professor, you've got to have more sense than the dog."

When the most primitive-minded community is sympathetically shown that schools are good investments, that education is the public's best protection, that school taxes are imposed democratically rather than autocratically, and that a school tax requires only a very small portion of the community's income, I have found no insurmountable difficulty in voting funds for school maintenance. The more enlightened communities support public education because they realize these values. It is a function of the county superintendent and the educational missionary in all capacities to simplify these values and

make them so plain that the crudest illiterate in all the land can understand them. It is not in centers of culture, but in remote precincts of this great nation of ours that the light of education needs most to penetrate and drive darkness from the souls of men.

It is in the most backward communities that the principle of *ad valorem* taxation for the support of free schools is least understood. It is there that "tax" is one of the most unpopular words in common use. There is the place where the people reside who are least able to figure for themselves, and where the most elementary explanations are necessary. To convince them that a tax of fifty cents on each one hundred dollars of wealth is not confiscatory or unreasonable, I have often taken a silver dollar and put a one-cent postage stamp by the side of it and shown that one-half of the value of the stamp is sufficient to pay the tax on the dollar for one year. Then they are reminded that the dollar is capable of earning eight cents per annum when put at interest. And when it is made clear and emphatic that no thoughtful, patriotic man would be so close and miserly as to begrudge one-half cent of this dollar's earnings to a cause so sacred as the cause of education for helpless children, enough voters to make the required majority on election day will usually

see the light. And this is typical of the methods and devices that must be employed by the practical field worker to overcome the inherent fear of taxation so prevalent in many backward rural localities.

5. **Poverty a State of Mind.**—Some people of wealth feel as though they are very poor. Others of very moderate means have the bearing and enjoy the feelings of opulence. They have the faculty of acquiring most of the comforts and conveniences of life in spite of the forbidding limitations of their bank-accounts. Their outlook on life is not beclouded with gloom. The deadening sense of poverty does not weigh heavily on their heads. They possess the spirit of buoyancy, thrift and brightness that guarantees individual prosperity and gives strength to organized society.

And so it is with communities. Some are courageous, confident, decisive in spirit, and always ready to champion any worthy public undertaking. Others are stupid, motionless and morbidly depressed with an inordinate consciousness of their own weakness and inability to do things. This is particularly true of many rural places. The sickening consciousness of poverty is cheating thousands of country communities in the South out of adequate free schools every year.

And the fact is, the per capita wealth in some of these poverty-conscious country districts with the school facilities of half a century ago is almost as great as the per capita wealth in the neighboring urban centers with the best of modern free-school advantages. For instance, in 1917, in a rural area including fourteen school districts in sight of the city of Austin, the per capita wealth was three hundred and eighty-five dollars as compared with the per capita wealth of four hundred and forty-nine dollars in Austin. But Austin spent sixty-seven and one-tenth cents per one hundred dollars of wealth on its public schools that year as compared with an expenditure of seven and three-tenths cents per one hundred dollars of wealth in this rural area. In other words, when measured by ability to pay, Austin is more than nine times as liberal in the support of its free schools as this group of country districts. Yet there is a common feeling among these country people that Austin's superior schools are due to its superior ability to finance them.

There is no kind of education more necessary among most country people just now than education on the subject of giving. These people may be evangelized and successfully converted to the values

of all that is modern and best for the educational welfare of their children; but until this blinding delusion of poverty is dispelled, we can hope for no very substantial advancement in the character and quality of their schools.

6. **Farm Tenants Show Little Interest in School Finances.**—There are four main causes for the tenant's general lack of interest in the financial support of the schools his children attend: (1) intimidation from landlords, (2) despondency, (3) shiftlessness, (4) poverty.

While there are many bitter charges of overt intimidation of tenants by covetous landlords, most of them, on investigation, prove untrue. Even the hardest of landlords are seldom so imprudent as to make a blatant threat to remove a tenant or raise the rent. Their untoward attitude usually finds expression in subtler ways. They speak the language of discouragement with great skill. They plead hard times and high prices. They advocate deferring school improvements to some later date. "Next year" is the time usually set. When a bond issue is proposed for building a new schoolhouse, they can easily show why it should be built by private donations. But no matter what the subterfuge employed, the deadly effects are always the same.

Despondency, shiftlessness and poverty hang like millstones on the necks of most tenant communities. "I work all the time," said an intelligent tenant farmer twenty-eight years old. "It is all I can do to clothe and feed my five babies. Land is one hundred and fifty dollars per acre. As for owning a home—well, there is no chance for me."

"Our system of land tenure is most damnable," said another well-informed tenant. "Why beautify the front yard, install running water in the house, keep up the lot fences, and repaint the schoolhouse for somebody else's benefit next year? My contract to work this farm lasts only to the end of December. If I had a ten-year contract, I guess my attitude toward the farm and the community would be different. Our system of land tenure is responsible for much of the shiftlessness and lack of public enterprise among the tenant classes."

It is all but futile to inaugurate any scheme for social and educational reform and at the same time ignore its fundamental hindering causes. That the problems of education can ever be successfully solved in a community of high-priced land and farm tenants is very doubtful to any one thoroughly conversant with such conditions. The homeless man is limited in his usefulness as a citizen. He seldom

identifies himself with the church, school and civic interests of the neighborhood as he would if he owned the land he lives on. He may be a good school patron, but the exhilarating stimulus of home-ownership would make him a better one.

7. **Absentee Landlords Object to Local School Taxes.**—There is not a county in the rich Black Land Belt of Texas where as many as fifty per cent. of the farmers own their homes. In Collin County sixty-nine per cent. of them are tenants. The same is true in Ellis County. And in some portions of the rich Brazos Valley outside of the Black Land Counties, the percentage of farm tenancy is even higher.

I have found no place in the state where it is more difficult to vote local school taxes than in these areas of high-priced land, farm tenants and absentee landlords. And this difficulty is by no means confined to the negro-tenant communities within the area described. In many white-tenant communities of English-speaking Americans a school tax is just as surely foredoomed to failure. There are two primary causes for it: (1) the inherent fear of taxation on the part of many poorly informed tenants, (2) the spirit of acquisition and greed on the part of the landlords.

In making a close examination of a tenant area

of two hundred square miles and more than thirteen thousand population in Travis County, I found that only one absentee landlord out of a group of more than thirty had actively encouraged his tenants to vote for a school tax. The following is typical of some of the information gathered from school patrons: "If you want to know what makes our school one of the sorriest in Travis County, I can tell you in a very few words. This community is owned and controlled by three men who do not live here. They keep their tenants in fear of them. Two years ago when we were circulating a petition for a tax election, Mr. A came out and said to his tenants: 'You vote a tax on me and I will see that you pay it. I will raise the rent on the last one of you.' Mr. B came out and said to his tenants, 'Gentleman, you may vote a tax on me if you choose, but you can prepare to move next year if you do.' Their bluffs carried. That was the last of the proposed school tax. You have found our school in a deplorable condition, and I see no hope for any immediate improvement."

When a landlord accumulates wealth and moves to town, he usually loses interest in the welfare of the community where he gained his financial independence. He feels no longer obligated to support

the rural institutions of the people who were once his country neighbors. Sometimes he grows actively unsympathetic toward all public enterprises in the rural precincts from whence he came. But, fortunately for country children, it is getting more unpopular all the time for a landlord to oppose a school tax. For that reason, it is growing less difficult to vote school taxes in some of the counties where the tenant population is heaviest. So much to the credit of relentless publicity.

As a remedy for the unsympathetic attitude of the absentee landlord toward rural-school finances, I wish to make two recommendations: (1) a graduated land tax so distributed as to place the burden of it on the larger estate; (2) an extension of the state's credit providing long-time payments and low rates of interest for tenant farmers desirous of owning homes. But since a discussion of these propositions falls within the province of the economist, I shall not make the attempt to discuss them here.

8. **A County-School Tax.**—A county-wide school tax would do much toward relieving the financial distress of many school districts now suffering from artificial economic pressure imposed from without. No other one measure would do more for the immediate financial relief of many

rural schools in tenant communities dominated by non-resident owners of land. And until outside assistance is given to some of these communities, economically helpless because of conditions over which they have no control, their schools must continue in a state of most abject squalor.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Sometimes it is best to hold a public rally when a school-tax election is pending, but this is not always so. Give examples of when it would be best and of when it would not be best. Why is an emotional appeal to voters sometimes as essential as a logical appeal?

2. If the doors of all the schools and churches in your home community were permanently closed, many of the best families would soon move away. What effect would this have on real estate values?

3. Why are most business investments unsafe in Mexico? In what respect are free schools guarantors of property rights in a democracy? Why should each person be required to support the public school in proportion to his ability to pay?

4. Some persons oppose taxation because of covetousness, others because of fear. Give examples of both groups. Why are the smallest taxpayers sometimes the bitterest opponents of an *ad valorem* school tax? In very backward communities it is usually difficult to vote a school tax. Why?

5. Many people contend that the country can never have as good schools as the towns because of the

country's lack of wealth and its inability to pay for them. Is this contention real or imaginary? When measured in terms of per capita wealth, which are more liberal in the support of public education, the rural districts or the town centers?

6. What per cent. of your school patrons are farm tenants? Give some reasons why farm tenants, as a rule, do not take active parts in school affairs. Would home-ownership make most farm tenants better school patrons?

7. Why are absentee landlords inimical to the best interest of rural schools? Have you ever known of one encouraging a tenant to vote for a school tax? Landlords in Texas are less violent in their opposition to school taxes than they were five years ago. Why?

8. Give some of the benefits to be derived from a county-wide school tax.

## CHAPTER XI

### Roads and Communication

1. **A Village School That Stood for Good Roads.**—A map made by a student showed the roads of the community, indicating existing conditions as to the distribution and availability of gravel, earth and macadam suitable for road construction. It also showed that there was an excessive mileage of roads—that distances could be shortened and the cost of upkeep lessened if the roads were differently arranged. One road running parallel to a creek for more than a mile was subject to periodical overflows very destructive to its hard surface. It was proposed this stretch of road be moved to higher land only a short distance away so as to reduce the cost of maintenance. The older pupils were familiar with the costs of earth excavations, gravel, broken stone and concrete for that particular locality. At the close of the school one member of the graduating class read an interesting paper on The Advantages of Good Roads. Here are some striking statements I have gleaned from it:

(1) "Good roads overcome many of the dis-

advantages of distance, and the advantages of living in town are thus transferred to the country."

(2) "Good roads have established a better feeling between country people and town people. While the city people go to the country for the pleasures of outdoor life, the farmer and his family have come to know the city better."

(3) "Good roads do much to overcome the monotony of isolation and check the movement from the country to town."

(4) "Bad roads, more than any other factor, tend toward isolation and individualism, which are directly opposed to organization and cooperation. Good roads, on the other hand, distinctly invite social intercourse and promote fraternal understanding.

(5) "Good roads build up the social and moral tone of the community, improve school conditions, increase property values, and stimulate civilization and advancement in all lines."

(6) "Improved roads will increase the value of farm lands within a mile of the road, on each side, at least five dollars per acre."

(7) "In 1912, the New York State Department of Agriculture found that the average value of all the farms in New York located on earth roads

was thirty-five dollars and twenty-one cents per acre and the average value of all the farms on macadam and other improved roads was fifty-one dollars and seventeen cents per acre."

(8) "The valuation of Harris County, Texas, in 1906, was forty-eight million dollars. Then it had only a few miles of improved roads. By 1911 it had three hundred and fifty miles of improved roads built at a cost of four thousand five hundred dollars per mile and the valuation of the county was one hundred and twenty million dollars."

(9) "The increase in land values is sufficient, and in some cases more than sufficient, to enable the landowner to pay his road tax in additional without an increase in the rate of levy."

(10) "Bad roads diminish the profits of the farmer by forcing him to make more trips, haul smaller loads, consume more time, and market his produce when the roads are passable rather than at those times when the markets are best."

(11) "Good roads increase the profits of the farmer by enabling him to make quicker trips, haul larger loads, and market his produce when the markets are best."

(12) "If all the roads were hard and smooth, the wagons would last much longer, each horse

would require much less feed and attention, and the bills for horseshoeing, repairing of harness, and the purchase of new harness would be reduced to a minimum."

(13) "If the roads of this county were in first-class condition, it would save the automobiles at least one cent on every mile traveled. That saving alone would amount to more than twenty thousand dollars per year, which would more than pay the interest and create the sinking fund on the amount of bonds necessary for putting the roads in good condition."

(14) "The attendance of children at school is governed very largely by the condition of the roads over which they pass in order to reach the school-house, and the average attendance of the child determines to a great extent the measure of benefits he receives from the school."

(15) "A rural church survey in a populous section of Southwestern Ohio reveals the fact that where the roads are poorest the population is decreasing. Where the number of miles of improved roads is the greatest, both the church membership and the enrollment per church are greatest."

(16) "The men who are chosen as county road commissioners handle the county's money and are

conservative guardians of the treasury. Their conspicuous defect is the lack of positive knowledge about road construction and road administration. As a rule their entire experience has been gained from one town or one county."

This school's interest and instruction in the advantages of good roads had permeated most of the citizenry of the community. The quiet work of education done in a modest way at the schoolhouse had set many of the voters to thinking and making intelligent calculations. One farmer presented his case thus: "I live nine miles from town. It takes one wagon one hundred days per year to market my hay, corn and cotton. It costs about four dollars per day to maintain a wagon, team and driver. I am put to an expense of four hundred dollars per year to market my farm produce. If the roads were in the condition they should be, I could double the size of the loads and market my crops in half the time with a saving of two hundred dollars. In other words, I am paying an annual mud tax of two hundred dollars on the roads we now have. My proportionate part of the tax necessary to make good roads would be only forty-five dollars per year." This man was for the *ad valorem* tax rather than for the less obvious but

more expensive mud tax that so many farmers pay every year and fail to see. Much of his enlightenment on the advantages of better roads had come through his fifteen-year-old son at school.

2. **The Chronic Opponent of Public Improvements.**—When the road bond election was held at McKinney, Texas, in 1914, the country lanes were like so many interminable miles of oppressive quagmire. One farmer drove in on the brick pavement with wagon wheels that were solid with mud. He paid a negro fifty cents to clean the mud off while he went and voted against better roads. The same day, five fellows hitched four big mules to a wagon and drove six miles through mud hub-deep to get to the polls to vote against the road tax. Some of these very men had cotton at home that they could not get to market, and the price was going down every day. There are other men like them. I could make a long list of their obdurate kind who are uncomprisingly opposed to taxes of all sorts and are too short-sighted to see the value and economy of stable public improvements. It is quite futile to try to educate some of them to a new point of view. The only hope in their cases is to reach their children through the public schools and rear a more enlightened generation of voters and public-spirited

citizens. Then we may hope for more citizens like the farmer near Bonham, Texas, who remarked, after paying a repair bill of five dollars and eighty-five cents on his broken harness as a result of getting stuck in a mud-hole, "This is one of the indirect methods we farmers have of paying our road taxes." Or, peradventure, there may be some like the good-natured old gardener near Harrisburg, Texas, in 1914. As a big van passed by with sixty merry children in it, he said: "Since they fixed these roads, haulin' them school kids is like haulin' my tomatoes. You can load your wagon down with them, but you can not overload your team. It is not a question of what your team can pull, but how much your wagon will hold up. I tell you, I sure am for these good roads."

3. **Public Roads and Public Schools.**—The condition of the public roads in a given locality is not an infallible index to the character of the public school, but is one that can be relied upon with a reasonable degree of accuracy. Occasionally a good school may be found in a locality where the roads are very bad; but, as a rule, the best schools are found where the best roads are. The relation between the roads and the schools is so intimate that the advocates of better schools must also be

advocates of better roads. When I read of a road tax being adopted or hear of a commissioner's court appropriating liberally for roads, culverts and bridges, I regard it as money applied for educational advancement as well as for social and economic advantage.

4. **Transportation of Pupils at Public Expense at Harrisburg, Texas.**—The town of Harrisburg is seven miles from the city of Houston. It has about twelve hundred inhabitants. There are three small incorporated towns in the Harrisburg common-school district: Magnolia Park, Park Place and Harrisburg. The district has a scholastic population of about one thousand pupils, and has five schools employing twenty-nine teachers. Thirteen of the teachers are employed in the central school at Harrisburg.

The central school does twenty standard units of high-school work. It has well-equipped laboratories for physics, chemistry, physiology, biology, manual training and domestic science. Hot lunches are provided for the pupils each day at actual cost. A free medical clinic for the pupils is also maintained by the school. In addition to all these advantages, the athletics and social-center work are well organized.

The first experiment in transporting pupils at public expense was inaugurated in 1912. A large van with room for sixty pupils was put into operation between Magnolia Park and Harrisburg—a distance of two miles. In 1913 another van was operated between Park Place and Harrisburg with accommodations for twenty-five pupils. In 1914 the Park Place van was displaced by a Ford car and trailer, and the car and trailer have since been displaced by a strong motor truck with a capacity for thirty pupils. This particular truck delivers two loads of children to the Harrisburg school each morning—twenty-seven from Park Place and twenty from Brookline. These two places are in the Harrisburg district about two miles each from the central school.

At present there are one hundred and seventy-two pupils transported to the Harrisburg school at public expense. One hundred and seven reside in the Harrisburg district and sixty-five in other districts. While public transportation of pupils has been operating within the district since 1912, it was not extended beyond it until 1916.

Three years ago a privately owned motor truck was put into use between Elena and Harrisburg at a cost of one hundred and ten dollars per month.

Elena is twenty miles from Harrisburg. This truck takes three high-school pupils from Elena each morning and collects all the pupils above the sixth grade from the small schools at Lynchburg, Deer Park, San Jacinto and Deepwater.

In 1916 a Ford car and trailer were used between South Houston and Harrisburg. It conveyed eighteen high-school pupils to the Harrisburg school that year. It has since been displaced by a motor truck purchased jointly by the South Houston and the Genoa school districts at a cost of nine hundred and fifty dollars. It is driven by a high-school boy from South Houston and carries twenty-seven children.

But the most unique of all the public conveyances for taking pupils to and from school is the motor boat from Penn City to Harrisburg. It began as a private conveyance for school purposes in 1913. Last year it was operated by the public at a cost of eighty dollars per month. This boat leaves Penn City on the ship canal fourteen miles from Harrisburg and collects fifteen children on the way.

By means of public transportation for pupils, the benefits of the central high school at Harrisburg are being extended to pupils twenty miles in one direction, fourteen miles in another, and ten miles

in still another. It is a magnificent example of the extension of high-school privileges to country children. As our country roads in the South continue to improve, many schools in the future will emulate this example.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

Town people and country people are much more cordial with each other than they were when I can first remember. Give some of the reasons for this increasing cordiality. Show that bad roads foster selfishness and individualism, while good roads encourage cooperation and public enterprise. How do good roads build up the social and moral tone of the community? Does farm land on the improved roads of your county have a better value than land of the same quality ten miles from such roads? If better roads in your county would save one cent per mile on automobiles, what would the annual saving amount to? Are any of your pupils ever prevented from attending school because of bad roads? What training has your county road commissioner had to qualify him for the office he holds? What does he know about road construction and road administration? How much would good roads save the average farmer in your school district in the marketing of his farm products each year? Would better roads be conducive to school consolidation and the enlargement of educational activities in your locality?

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## CHAPTER XII

### The Public School and the Health of the Community

1. **Country Children Are Less Healthy Than City Children.***—Statistics on the health of school children show that country children are more defective than city children. It was found in 1831 rural districts in Pennsylvania that 75 per cent. of the pupils were defective, as compared with 72 per cent. for 287,499 children in the schools of New York City. Upon investigation it has been found that heart trouble is twice as prevalent among country children as among city children, and spinal curvature twenty-seven times as prevalent. There are many more cases of malnutrition in the country than in the city. Further comparisons of the health of rural and urban children are as follows: mental defectives in rural districts, 8 per cent., in urban districts 2 per cent.; ear trouble among country children 5 per cent., among city children 1 per cent.; country children suffering from defective eyes 21.8

*These comparative statistics are quoted from Dr. Philip Sumner Spence of Teacher's College, New York City, in *Public Health*, September, 1915, published by the Michigan State Board of Health, Lansing, Mich.

per cent., city children 5.1 per cent.; adenoids among country children 21.5 per cent., among city children 8.5 per cent.; enlarged tonsils among country children 30 per cent., among city children 8.8 per cent.

In 1915, at the instance of State Superintendent J. D. Eggleston, a sanitary survey was made for the white and colored schools of Orange County, Virginia. The results were later published by the United States Bureau of Education, Bulletin 1914, No. 17. The most striking findings are as follows: 27 per cent. of the white pupils and 23 per cent. of the colored pupils examined in the one-teacher schools had defective eyesight, while the eyes of only 17 per cent. in the graded school were found to be defective. In the one-room schools 31.2 per cent. showed evidences of malnutrition; 67 per cent. of the boys and 32 per cent. of the girls were anemic. As to hook-worm, 35.6 per cent. in the one-room white schools, 19.5 per cent. in the rural colored schools, and 14.5 per cent. in the graded schools were infected. Other findings were as follows: defective permanent teeth, 58 per cent.; defective temporary teeth, 42 per cent.; defective hearing, 7.5 per cent.; adenoids, 34.7 per cent.; deviated septums, 31 per cent.

People in the country live in poorer houses and

eat food that is poorer in variety and quality than city people do. Many country men never saw a good wholesome biscuit in their lives, but the baker's loaf is known to city dwellers of all ranks. Malnutrition stalks like a monster among children of the less provident families of the country. And the homes of poor people in the country are more squalid than those occupied by people of the same degree of poverty in the cities. They are not furnished so well, and the heating and ventilating are more detrimental to the health of the occupants. We have rural slums with living conditions every bit as intolerable as those of the vilest urban slums. And the children from these unclean homes often attend schools equally as unclean and ill-furnished. Wet feet, cold bodies, foul atmosphere, seats made for grown people, and lunches that are cold, clammy and indigestible, contribute their parts to the high percentage of ill health and physical deformities found among country children.

The human organism requires intelligent care. If the purpose of the free school is to teach the rural and urban masses the art of complete living, health instruction is one of its elemental functions. The medical inspector and the public health nurse must be aligned more closely with the public schools.

2. **Small Physical Defects Prevent Many Children from Passing Their Grades.**—In a city of nine thousand population a physical examination was made of all the pupils who failed to pass their grades the year before. It was found that some of them failed to pass because their mouths were full of carious teeth that so befouled their breath, deranged their digestion and poisoned their system that normal mental action was impossible. Quite a number failed because of dull headaches occasioned by eye-strains that could have been easily relieved by lenses from a competent oculist; others failed because of defective ears that prevented them from hearing and understanding much of the instruction their teachers gave; constant annoyances from nasal passages clogged with growths of adenoids caused the failures of some; and diseased tonsils and malnutrition prevented many others from making their grades.

One interesting case was that of a large, inert, fourteen-year-old boy who had been in the fifth grade for three years. Upon examination it was found that his eyesight was good, his hearing was perfect, his teeth were sound, his nasal passages free from adenoids, and his tonsils healthy. But inquiries directed to the quality and variety of food upon which he subsisted revealed the fact that his large

soft body was underfed. He lived almost entirely on a diet of bread and sirup. His muscles and nerves did not get the protein and other food elements necessary to make them vigorous and healthy. It was physically impossible for his half-starved brain and nerves to do accurate, straight thinking.

3. **Better Food for Farm People and Farm Animals.**—A low grade of gasoline provokes engine trouble. The working efficiency of an engine can be no higher than the quality of fuel used. The same is true of the human body. Poor food makes all its movements labored and heavy. Food that is low in quality and poor in variety leaves the body weakened and susceptible to disease.

Good food and plenty of it is wise economy. A balanced ration of palatable food not only gives physical comfort and bodily efficiency, but it is often less expensive than the unbalanced menus on which some poor families subsist. For example, a transient family of seven members on the streets of a Texas town was engaged by a thrifty farmer to pick cotton through the fall months of 1912. The farmer paid their grocery bills for ninety-two days while they worked for him. They lived on coffee, wheat flour, sirup, and the fattest sort of cheap bacon. The father and mother of this poor family were

urged to get a better variety of food for their pale-faced children. But they insisted that they were poor people, unaccustomed to luxuries, and could make out on what they had. So each order of groceries was a duplicate of the previous one calling for more coffee, flour, sirup and fat bacon. These people were not extravagant or wasteful. They thought they were living economically. But at the end of ninety-two days their landlord discovered that this slim variety of food had cost them more per individual than it had cost him to feed his own family on a well-balanced ration during the same time.

An unbalanced ration is both unhealthy and uneconomical. This is as true for the farmer's live stock as for his family. Many a farmer feeds a dollar's worth of feed and gets back only ninety cents' worth of live weight because the ration lacks balance and variety. Flocks of hens are given nothing but fat-producing feed when eggs are the product desired. Stock cattle are fed some high-priced concentrate with insufficient roughage to go with it. Then the hens are blamed for not laying eggs and the cattle are disposed of at a loss, while the farmer complains at his "hard luck."

The chapters on dietetics in our physiologies are

usually passed over lightly. But some teachers are seizing upon them as practical opportunities for impressing the need for better rations for the family and the farm animals. In one community a flock of pure-bred hens was laying no eggs. A school-boy asked for a sample of the feed they were getting. He found it consisted of a mixture of crushed Indian corn, feterita, and milo maize—all fat-producing grains. Then he remarked, "It is impossible for these hens to lay eggs when they are not getting the feed eggs are made out of." This boy had not had a regular course in poultry feeding. He had merely received a few well-taught lessons in the physiology class. A few simple lessons in the feeding of poultry and farm animals had come to him as a practical corollary to the chapter on human dietetics. "There is more physiology and hygiene in the feeding and care and management of live stock and poultry than in the text-books, and it is physiology and hygiene in which all the family, and the family's income, are concerned."

4. **Teaching School Children the Benefits of Ventilation, Deep Breathing, and Outdoor Sleeping.** —Fresh air is a great nerve tonic. Outdoor sleeping has become popular during recent years. No modern home in the South is complete without a sleeping

porch. All the living-rooms are planned to have a sufficiency of light and air. People are learning that sunlight and fresh air are essential to the health of their bodies.

But many families still live and sleep behind closed doors and lowered windows. Children who would not dare eat with unwashed hands or unwashed knives and forks will breathe and rebreathe unclean air that has been inhaled and exhaled dozens of times by themselves and the other members of the household. And the atmosphere of the crowded living-room is further befouled by the stupefying gases from a kerosene lamp for several hours before bedtime.

Carbon dioxide is always present in exhaled air. It is a colorless, odorless gas. Its perception is beyond the reach of the natural senses. This makes it elusive and all the more dangerous. If it were visible or offensive in smell, its presence would be easier to detect. One of the simplest ways of revealing its presence is by the lime-water test. Put a handful of slacked lime into a quart of water and allow it to stand over night. The lime will settle to the bottom. Draw off the clear water standing above the lime into another vessel, being very careful not to stir up the lime from beneath. Fill a test-

tube to a depth of one inch with the clear lime water, and with a quill or a glass tube bubble the breath through it for one-half minute. The white precipitate forming the milky color indicates the presence of carbon dioxide. The visible evidence thus deduced will impress pupils how very unclean it is to breathe after one another. This one simple demonstration will force more windows and doors open in the sleeping-rooms back at home than a whole week of lecturing and moralizing on the benefits of fresh air.

While teaching a country school ten years ago, I improvised a spirometer to test the lung capacities of some of the pupils. It was done in this simple and inexpensive way: a two-gallon bottle was filled with water and inverted into a large basin containing about one inch of water in the bottom of it. The end of a piece of rubber tubing was inserted well up into the neck of the inverted bottle of water. Then the pupil whose lung capacity was to be measured would inhale all the air his lungs would hold and blow into the free end of the rubber tube till his breath was exhausted. This would force part of the water out of the bottle, replacing it with air from the lungs. The volume of the air above the water remaining in the inverted bottle represents

the capacity of the pupil's lungs. Gradings on the outside of the bottle give the amount in cubic inches. Each pupil's lung capacity was tested every month and a record kept of it. These simple exercises did more to establish habits of deep breathing and to impress the need for an abundance of fresh air at all times than I ever could have accomplished through admonitions and explanations by word of mouth.

5. **Screens for Country Schoolhouses and Country Homes.**—A modern one-room schoolhouse was built near a malarial swamp. It was neat and attractive. It met all the scientific specifications as to lighting, heating and furniture. But the building contract failed to provide for screens. School opened in October. The children's bare feet and ankles were exposed to mosquitoes all day. It was impossible for them to study in the midst of such annoyances. The teacher applied to the school board for screen wire with meshes sufficiently close to keep out the smallest mosquitoes. The request was granted, and the windows and doors were screened on Saturday of the first week of school. Then the teacher closed the house tightly and fumigated it with sulphur candles till Monday morning. By that time every vestige of insect life in it had

been destroyed. All the pupils carried reports of the improved conditions back home. They were encouraged by the teacher to insist that their parents screen their homes: windows, doors and chimney flues. Later in the year a stereopticon lecture was given by the teacher on the dangers of the mosquito. By the following June nine houses in the school district had been screened. Besides that, cans of dripping oil over pools of standing water had destroyed many of the best breeding-places.

The business men in one of the malarial sections of Texas put on an anti-mosquito campaign. It created a great demand for screen wire. The slogan of "Screens for Every Home" brought on a concerted war against mosquitoes in the town and surrounding country. Five years later a local druggist took a visitor in the town back behind the prescription case and showed him a large quantity of anti-malarial remedies that had been dead stock on his shelves since the houses were made proof against the mosquitoes.

"In four towns in Arkansas anti-mosquito measures were carried out with marked success. By the draining of foul pools, by ditching sluggish streams, and by oiling surface water which could not be otherwise dealt with, the breeding of anopheles mosquitoes was almost entirely prevented. The results,

as tested by the number of calls made by physicians on persons suffering from the disease, were striking. In Hamburg, Arkansas, the number of calls fell from 2312 in 1916, to 259 in 1917, and to 59 in 1918, a reduction of 97.4 per cent. for the period. The per capita cost for 1917 was $1.45; for 1918 it was only 44 cents. It is cheaper to get rid of malaria than it is to have it."*

In an area badly infested with mosquitoes every white home in a village of six hundred was tightly screened. Health education at school, in cooperation with the local doctors, did it. At a community picnic one day, before all the homes were screened, the teachers put the children from the screened homes in one group and those from the unscreened homes in another. The two groups of children looked as if they might have come from two different worlds. In fact, they did. One group came from the unprotected land of disease-breeding insects; the other from homes that were proof against them. One group was robust and rosy; the other was wan and sallow. The object lesson was too striking not to be heeded. It called for screens for all the homes that did not have them.

Upon a motion by a philanthropic person a fly-trapping and house-screening campaign was

*George E. Vincent, *Rockefeller Foundation Review for* 1918, pages 11-12.

launched in a West-Texas village. The schoolboys were taught to make fly-traps and a bounty of ten cents per quart was offered for all the flies captured. In the course of forty days, one hundred and nine quarts of flies were destroyed, and bounties were paid to the amount of ten dollars and ninety cents for their dead bodies. But still there was no appreciable decrease in the fly population of the village. Flies were everywhere. They were in great swarms. If there was any difference, they were more numerous than at the beginning of the campaign to exterminate them. It was puzzling to some of the people. The teacher and a local doctor called public attention to the fact that no effort was being made to destroy the flies' breeding-places. They were multiplying by the tens of thousands every day. Dirty stables, filthy outhouses, garbage heaps, manure piles, and some half-decayed strawstacks in the neighborhood were literally teaming with fly larvæ. The strawstacks were burned, dirty stables cleaned out, outhouses cleaned and disinfected, and other breeding-places destroyed. In a few weeks the community was about free from its pest of flies. To try to kill out flies without destroying their breeding-places is like trying to sweep water out of a room while an open hydrant is running on the floor.

When such work as killing out flies and mosquitoes and screening homes against them is championed by the teacher, it increases the community's respect and appreciation for him. Patrons and pupils look upon him as a friend genuinely sympathetic and true. It gives the teacher and the school a new prestige among them. They will support the school with loyalty and devotion because of its immediate worth to the basic comforts of life.

6. **Bath Tubs and Sanitary Outhouses for Country Homes.**—The scarcity of bath tubs in country communities is not always due to inability to afford them. The homes of many prosperous farmers have no such conveniences. The creek for the summer and the wash-basin for the winter are their only bathing facilities. And many times even these are not used as much as they should be.

In a wealthy agricultural community a teacher induced a farmer to put in a new porcelain bath tub. An illustrated lecture was given on "Bathing Facilities and Kitchen Conveniences for Country Homes." This was followed by lessons at school on "The Value of the Bath Tub" and "The Meaning of Cleanliness." At the end of two years fourteen homes had bath tubs. Most of them were equipped for hot and cold water. These homes had been able

to afford them for many years, but had given them no attention till the teacher called attention to them.

A fly-proof, sanitary toilet with a cement floor was observed at a country home. It was an exact copy of the one at school. The proprietor of the home said: "Yes, that boy of mine thought the one at the schoolhouse was a good thing. Then he and I built this one." Now there are seven others just like it in use at the country homes in that district. They represent emulations of the example set by the school.

7. **Lessons in Cleanliness.**—At one home the face towel was hanging on the inverted broom with the wind flapping one of its soiled corners into the bucket of drinking water near it. The towel was absorbing all sorts of filth and disease the polluted broom had picked up from the unclean floor. All the members of the family dried their faces on it. After dinner the father plucked a straw from the broom and used it for a tooth-pick. At another home the dishrag was sopping and sour. No member of the family would have dared bring it in contact with his bare lips. Yet they all ate out of plates and with knives and forks over which its filth had been spread. Flies came in through the open windows from the outhouses, pig-pens and manure

piles and walked on the food they ate. Blinky, flat-tasting milk was served from a vessel that had not had its inside seams and crevices thoroughly cleaned and sterilized with scalding water and direct sunlight for a long while. A common butter dish with no butter knife was a place where small bits of saliva were exchanged from one mouth to another as the butter was cut with individual knives. There was no spoon in the meat dish and none in the large bowl of stewed fruit. Individual forks were taken directly from the mouths of those about the table and used in helping their plates. These are just a few of the examples of uncleanliness that a lady teacher who taught with me in a village school a few years ago used in emphasizing the lessons of sanitation in her physiology class.

In that school we had as little laboratory equipment as schools of four teachers ordinarily have, which means practically none at all. But my able assistant was an artist in improvising simple experiments and impressive demonstrations. Here is the way in which I observed her simplify the chapter of the physiology text on bacteria and communicable diseases in a period of five days. A potato was boiled in a clean tomato can on top of the school stove. Then it was sliced into four pieces with a knife

blade thoroughly sterilized in an alcohol flame in the presence of the pupils. Each slice was put on a saucer that had been sterilized in boiling water. Then one of the slices was inoculated by a boy's touching his dirty fingers to it for a few seconds; another one by bringing it in contact with the schoolroom floor; the third one by making two dim scratches across it with a pin dipped into stagnant water containing some partly decayed hay; and the fourth one was not inoculated at all. Then they were covered with inverted glass tumblers to exclude the dust and bacteria from the outside air and set away on a dark shelf for four days.

At the end of four days they were brought before the class again. In the meantime the teacher had explained how very small spores and disease germs are. She explained that they multiply very rapidly and that each parent spore on the inoculated potato would have a large family in a few days. The individual spores and germs were too small to see, but the whole families, or colonies, growing from them were perfectly visible. When the cultures were brought before the class and uncovered, the one inoculated by the boy's dirty fingers showed thirteen colonies; the one brought in contact with the floor, nine colonies; the one inoculated from

the hay infusion was bristling with mildew; and the one not inoculated at all was still clean and fleecy white. The teacher had proved that the boy's fingers were dirtier than the school-room floor. She gave those pupils a practical glimpse deep down into the world of diatoms away out there in a village school without the aid of a high-priced microscope. These simple, forceful lessons were very visibly reflected in their habits and practises of cleanliness in school and at home.

Some teachers teach to get practical results. Their purpose is to improve the pupils' habits of thinking and living. They are real teachers. Others are nothing more than cheap conventional drill-masters preparing pupils for but little else than to pass to the grade next above. Just how ridiculous the average stereotyped free school of to-day will be in the eyes of the historian one hundred years hence, I should like to know.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. Account for the health of city children being better than the health of country children. Give a summary of the findings of the health survey among the rural schools of Orange County, Virginia.

2. Has the health of your pupils been inspected by a competent physician this year? Are any of them

suffering from adenoids, carious teeth, or diseased tonsils? Have you procured a set of Snellen's cards from an oculist and tested the eyesight of all your pupils? Have you prevailed on the parents of the defective children in your school to have them given medical treatment? Does your county have a public health nurse?

3. Why is a ration that is unwholesome and incomplete sometimes more expensive than a ration that is palatable and well-balanced? What are some of the physical evidences of malnutrition among children? Show how farmers sometimes lose money by feeding their live stock incomplete rations. Can you give a formula for a balanced ration for a flock of laying hens? What is some of the most economical poultry feed produced in the locality where you reside?

4. Have you any pupils who are flat-chested and weakly? Have you made a spirometer as outlined in this chapter and tested the capacities of their lungs? Have you performed the lime-water test for carbon dioxide in the presence of your physiology class?

5. What per cent. of the homes in your school district have screens? Why is it so necessary to screen chimney flues during the summer months in malarial districts? (Screen against anopheles mosquitoes with No. 16 screen wire; *i. e.*, screens with sixteen wires to the inch.) Mosquitoes incubate in water. They like sluggish, standing water best. Are there any such breeding-places for mosquitoes near your school or near any of the homes from which your pupils come? If so, could any of them be successfully drained? Artificial ponds for stock water sometimes get infested with "wiggletails." They can be killed out by placing

cans of dripping oil so the oil will spread over the surface of the water. (Crude petroleum is the least expensive oil to use for that purpose.) Why is trapping flies of little use unless their breeding-places are destroyed? Name all the places you can where flies breed.

6. Do all the well-to-do farmers where you teach have bath tubs in their homes? If not, why not? Are the toilets at your school fly-proof and sanitary?

7. Have you ever seen people eat food out of plates that were washed with sour dishrags? Is it possible for disease to be communicated from mouth to mouth through the medium of a common butter dish that has no knife in it? Do you ever give your pupils lessons on good table manners? What are some of the devices you have used for impressing the lessons of home sanitation and personal cleanliness this year?

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## CHAPTER XIII

### The Rural School Museum

1. **How the Material for a Museum Was Collected by a Country Teacher.**—One Monday morning a teacher brought before her room a very pleasing curio. She held it up in plain view of the children and told them an interesting story about it. Then she said: "Children, we are going to make this curio week. A valuable curio can be found in almost every home. We can make good use of these curios in our work at school. I want you to collect as many of them as you can and bring them to me. Do not bring them to-morrow. But to-morrow each of you may tell what you think you can bring."

On Tuesday morning the teacher exhibited another curio to the room, gave its history and heard short reports from several pupils on what they could contribute to the curio collection. The morning exercises were occupied in a similar way Wednesday and Thursday. Thursday morning she announced that the curios collected during the week might be brought to school the next day.

The following is a partial list of what appeared at the teacher's desk on Friday morning: two swords that saw service in the Civil War; one bayonet; one Bowie knife; an Indian scalp; one small vase from Palestine; quite a collection of sea shells; shark's teeth, and other marine specimens; a human skull; some Indian crockery; and quite a number of flint arrowheads and spearheads. In fact, the teacher said: "My desk was simply buried with interesting relics. You could not have carried them away in a wheelbarrow at one full load. My next task was to classify the material and put it away on the shelves. And it taught me this lesson: Not to allow any pupil to bring more than two specimens in any one week while we were making the rest of our collection."

The next week was fossil week. On Monday morning the teacher brought before the room a petrified shell found on a hillside near the schoolhouse and told what it was and how it came to be there. On Tuesday morning she exhibited some petrified shark's teeth found in the same locality. The following Friday morning there were brought to the teacher's desk: one mammoth's tooth; numerous petrified marine shells; specimens of petrified wood; bits of bituminous coal, anthracite coal and

lignite; shales from a coal mine sixty miles away beautifully imprinted with fern leaves that grew many thousands of years ago; and some pieces of bog iron-ore bearing clear outlines of the leaves of forest trees that flourished when Earth was much younger than it is to-day.

The third week was insect week. The teacher brought two insects before the class—a Colorado potato beetle and a monarch butterfly. She took ten minutes to tell of the habits and life-history of each. Then she immersed them in a small quantity of gasoline, explaining that she used this method of killing them to avoid mutilating and disfiguring their bodies. Next she mounted them on pieces of cardboard she had brought for that purpose and set them away to dry. On the following Friday morning more than fifty mounted specimens were brought to her desk. Four cigar boxes were required to accommodate them. Some moth balls were placed in each box to keep the parasites away, and they were put on the museum shelves to become part of the permanent equipment of the school.

In like manner, one week was devoted to collecting and mounting native wild flowers; another to the seeds of harmful weeds; and a week each to native wild grasses, wild fruits and nuts, the leaves

and stems of domesticated plants, and the different field crops in the neighborhood.

2. **The Use of the Museum.**—In commenting on her school equipment the teacher said: "I could hardly get along without the museum. It helps me simplify so many of the lessons called for in the course of study. This is especially true with the subjects of physical geography, physiology, nature study and English composition. Both in assigning lessons and in teaching them, concrete material from the shelves of the museum is of invaluable assistance in making them interesting and attractive. When I want an original English composition, I go to the museum, select my subject, hold it up before my pupils, and familiarize them with it. Then they are not at a loss for something to write about."

Just a few miles from this place was another school taught by a very pretty girl whom, for convenience, we shall call Catherine. I had visited her school and given her pupils the same tests in arithmetic, reading, spelling and English composition that I had given in the school with the museum. In commenting on the grades made by these pupils the teacher of the first school made a statement that I think is full of educational merit. She said: "My

pupils have passed better tests in original composition writing than Catherine's pupils simply because they have more to write about. Their minds have richer contents. They have seen, touched, handled and mastered so many of the things about which I have taught them. But Catherine's pupils have merely heard of a good many things. That is all. Their minds are filled with inaccurate imaginary conceptions of too many things they have never seen."

What was the difference between these two girls? One was a school-teacher, the other a pretty girl teaching school; one was a community leader, the other a boarder in the community; one was facing problems squarely and meeting them in her own original, practical way, the other applying the formal practises of the school-room just as she had inherited them from the teachers who taught her; one had caught the community-service idea in education, the other followed the letter of the text-book and was blind to most of the vital needs of the people she had pledged herself to serve.

Both from experience as a country teacher myself and from what I have observed among country schools taught by others, I am taking this occasion to recommend the museum as an essential part of

the equipment of every up-to-date rural school. Country children must be brought into closer and more intelligent acquaintance with the commonplace things about them. They need to know more about things in the country. The wild flowers, busy insects, growing field crops, and even the dead fossils embedded in the rocks by the roadside are pregnant with truth and beauty for all who have an intelligent appreciation of them. Concrete, illustrative material is indispensable to the successful initiation of the child into the beautiful mysteries of natural science. The school museum offers the best means of making this material convenient and available for use in the class-room.

3. **The Essentials of a Rural-School Museum.** —Elaborate physical equipment is not so necessary for teaching elementary science if the teacher knows how to organize and use the material for instruction that nature has everywhere so generously provided. The keys that unlock the doors to scientific truth are in abundance on every country hillside, in the meadow, by the brook, at the mill, in the poultry yard, at the dairy barn, and at every other point in our physical environment, if teachers only knew better how to recognize them and use them intelligently. Concrete, illustrative material taken fresh

from the fold of nature is often preferable to highly polished pieces of factory-made apparatus. High-priced, complex apparatus sometimes distracts the mind of the elementary student and confuses facts with appearances. Much home-made equipment is highly desirable in rural and village schools. The older boys will make many pieces of simple apparatus, and the pupils of all ages will assist in collecting such a museum as herewith outlined if the teacher will only explain what is wanted and how it is to be used. Such equipment is inexpensive, and the work of making and collecting it is highly educative.

The first equipment needed is a place to put things while they are not in use. Mice and dust will injure many valuable specimens if a closed case is not provided for them. All specimens should be mounted, labeled and arranged so that they may be easily found when wanted. As soon as the teacher has decided on the topics to be included in the year's work, she should make notes of all the material needed and begin collecting accordingly. Much of the material will have to be collected at the season when it is available and preserved for future use. The pupils will do most of the work if the teacher will lead the way. The following is a partial list

of the material that can be collected in almost any country community:

**Common Insects.**—In this collection it is well to include mounted specimens of butterflies, moths, beetles, spiders, grasshoppers, dragon-flies, bees and wasps. Secure the eggs, larvæ and complete life-history of as many of the insects as possible that are injurious to man, farm animals, gardens, orchards and field crops. These should include flies, mosquitoes, cattle ticks, blue bugs, squash bugs, chinch bugs, sphinx moths, coddling moths, borers, Colorado potato beetles, green bugs, boll-weevils, granary weevils. Where possible, secure samples of the destruction done by these insects. Both the larval and the adult forms of such specimens as grubworms, cutworms and wireworms should be included. (Put captured insects in gasoline to kill them.) Preserve the larval forms in five per cent. formaline solution. Mount the adult specimens on pins and dry. Put them in closed cigar boxes and fumigate occasionally with carbon bisulphide or with moth balls to keep parasites from destroying them. (See Farmer's Bulletin No. 606, *Collection and Preservation of Insects and Other Material for Use in the Study of Agriculture,* U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.)

**Small Animals.**—The pelts, skulls and skeletons of many small animals can be easily obtained. The schoolboys will be glad to assist in making a collection of skulls of birds, rodents and carniverous and herbiverous animals. This might include the skull of the hawk, crow, pigeon, partridge, squirrel, rat, rabbit, cat, dog, sheep and goat. Treat all pelts of animals with a dilute solution of corrosive sublimate to keep the parasites from injuring them. (To remove the flesh from the skeleton of an animal, skin the carcass and remove the viscera and larger muscles with a knife. Then boil it in a soapy solution till the remaining flesh is removed. In the case of small animals such as mice, sparrows or toads, skin them and place the carcasses under a wire gauze in a "farmer ant" bed for a few days. The ants will remove the rest of the flesh.)

**Grasses and Weeds.**—Tied in small uniform bundles: rescue grass, fox tail, crab-grass, Bermuda, wild millet, mesquite, gramma grass, carpet grass, Johnson grass, Soudan grass, and other varieties.

Weeds and weed seed: cocklebur, jimpson, tumble-weed, thistle, nettles, bitter-weed, blue-weed, sunflower, tie vines, etc.

**Legumes.**—Perennials: mesquite, coffee bean, locust, cat claw, and other varieties.

Annuals: Alfalfa, sweet clover, bur clover, vetches, soy-beans, velvet beans, field peas, peanuts with vine, etc. Secure specimens of vetch and alfalfa that show bacterial nodules adhering to roots.

**Cereals.**—Corn: Ears of different types: dent type, flint type, soft corn, sweet corn and popcorn. Ears showing proportion of corn to cob, space between rows, straight rows, well-filled types, uniformity of circumference. Ideal stalk with ear, specimens of corn smut, corn products, etc.

Wheat: Selected heads of native varieties. Mill products in small bottles: screenings, wheat ready to grind, middlings, bran, entire wheat flour.

Oats: Types of heads: spreading and side. Varieties: white, black, red, gray. Smutty heads with treatment for same.

Barley: Selected heads of bearded and beardless types, two-row and six-row types.

Grain Sorghums: Selected heads of milo, kafir and feterita.

**Cotton and Cotton Products.**—Bolls, stalks, leaves and samples of fibers from different varieties. Fibers of different lengths mounted side by side. Samples of the standard grades of cotton. Cotton fiber products. Cotton-seed products: oil, cake, meal, hulls.

**Fruits and Vegetables.**—Collect and preserve tubers, fruits and vegetables in glass jars in two per cent. formaline solution. Make an extensive collection of southern nuts. Lay special emphasis on the pecan by securing as many varieties as possible. Collect and label small quantities of seed from all the fruits and vegetables grown in the locality.

**The Dairy.**—Pictures and models of ideal dairy farms and sanitary appliances for handling milk and other dairy products. Preserved specimens of cottage cheese, American cheese and Swiss cheese. Petri dishes with colonies of bacteria from impure milk, cow-hairs and manure particles. If the Petri dishes can not be had conveniently, collect pictures of different culture media in which bacterial colonies have been grown.

**Rations for Farm Animals.**—Secure a few large-size glass test-tubes from a chemistry laboratory. Make a collection of all the available kinds of stock feed that are locally produced: hay, fodder, silage, wheat bran, cotton-seed meal, cotton-seed hulls, Indian corn and grain sorghums. Get the formulæ from text-books or from government bulletins for balanced rations for beef cattle, laying hens, fattening hogs and other farm animals. Fill test-tubes

according to these formulas. Keep the different feeds in the test-tubes separated from one another by partitions made of thin paper wads so that the proportion of each feed required in the ration can be seen. Assign tubes to their proper place in the school museum so they will be ready for illustrative use when needed.

**Woods of Orchard and Forest Trees.**—Specimens of wood that have been injured by fungous diseases, borers and mistletoe. Specimens of wood from all the local forest trees sawed and polished so as to show both the longitudinal and the cross sections. (*Forestry in Nature,* Farmer's Bulletin No. 468, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.)

**Geological Fossils.**—Many of the sand and limestone strata in the South are very rich in marine fossils. Shark's teeth and crocodile teeth, and various kinds of fossilized marine shells can be found in great abundance in many localities. The teeth, tusks and bones of the mammoth and other extinct land animals are quite common in many parts of Texas. The children and patrons of the school will take great interest in collecting these specimens and bringing them to the schoolhouse when encouraged to do so. As many different kinds of

native ores and stones as possible should also be gathered and brought to the school museum.

**Historical Relics.**—Stone hatchets, stone arrowheads, pipes, pottery, moccasins and other Indian relics. Coins, postage stamps, curios, ancient documents, colonial household articles and the like might very appropriately fall in this collection.

**Soils and Fertilizers.**—Samples of as many different kinds of soils and commercial fertilizers as can be obtained.

**Pictures.**—Collect pictures of all the different kinds and types of farm animals. Good pictures of model farms, farm conveniences, dairy barns, and the like should be saved for the school. Many valuable pictures can be taken from the *Country Gentleman, Farm and Ranch* and other farm papers. All good pictures bearing on any of the school subjects should be saved and put where they can be found when needed.

# CHAPTER XIV

## A Standard Rural School

1. **What Is a Standard School?**—In the industrial world, the standardization of machines and the consequent standardization of products have wrought miracles in the efficiency and economy of production. But before there could be a standardization of products, the machines employed in production had first to be standardized. For instance, Nut No. 15 on the new Liberty Motor is just like Nut No. 15 on every other Liberty Motor. It will fit and fill the function for which it was intended on any of them. But this convenience and economy is possible only as the result of machines designed to turn out uniform parts.

This same principle has been carried into the school business. The idea is that, before the sixth-grade pupil can hold his own and stand on equal terms with sixth-grade pupils from any other school, there must first be a standardization of teachers, courses of study, equipment and working machinery in the entire school system. Within certain flexible limitations this is all good and well. But

standards that are too rigid and unyielding lead to grave injustices in education, for not all children have the same tastes and endowments, just as square pegs do not fit into round holes. Yet, it would be exceedingly difficult to conduct a system of public schools without some prescribed requirements.

Without standards, comparisons are impossible. One of the best means of getting a school to improve itself is by comparing it with other schools similarly environed. Numerous score-cards have been devised for this purpose during recent years. But a perfect score-card is an impossibility. Some of the factors in a school, such as the personality of the teacher and the spirit of the pupils, are qualitative and can not be measured by quantitative standards.

Above all other things, a practical score-card for a country school must be definite and concrete. It will fail in its purpose if its rubrics are abstract and general. Country children, country-school trustees, and most country teachers do the greater amount of their thinking in concrete terms. Their conversations are usually about tangible objects in their environment. They are not concerned so much about theories, concepts and principles as with things they can see and touch.

The score-card herewith submitted will, no doubt, receive its full share of criticism from the educational theorist. In fact, its imperfections are so numerous that it will be positively painful to the astute idealist. But for the teacher on the job dealing with actual conditions and honestly endeavoring to improve them, I trust that it will be of some practical service.

The numerical values assigned to each of the rubrics are arbitrary and subject to any change that the teacher or the superintendent may see fit to make. In fact, this score-card is merely a suggestive one, inviting revision and adaptation to the special needs of any rural locality.

### Score-card for a Rural School

(A total of 1,000 points is a 100 per cent. school)

**I. Sanitation and Hygiene:**

Water supply: well, cistern, spring or creek (well 11 points, cistern 9 points, spring 2 points, creek 0 points) ..... 11

Well at schoolhouse or hydrant in school yard 8

Pump in well (Scores same for running hydrant water) ..... 8

Drinking facilities: bubbling fountains, 12

points; hydrants and individual cups, 10 points; individual cups and common bucket, 2 points; common cup and common bucket, 0 points ..... 12

Two clean, fly-proof, sanitary toilets, not less than thirty yards apart and not defaced.... 12

Jacketed stoves, properly installed, and neatly polished ..... 11

Thermometer ..... 3

Clean floors ..... 6

Clean walls and clean furniture..... 6

Dustless crayon ..... 3

Oiled dust cloth ..... 3

Slate or hyloplate blackboard with chalk trough and dustless erasers..... 6

Sweeping compound or oiled floors..... 6

Window space equal to one-sixth of floor space 8

Windows grouped and seats arranged so light does not come directly into pupils' eyes..... 5

Windows and doors screened..... 5

Window shades, adjustable from the top..... 5

Sanitary cloak-rooms ..... 4

Bathing facilities: lavoratories, wash basins, individual towels and mirror..... 8

Place for eating lunches..... 4

Sanitary shelves for lunch baskets..... 4

Shoe scrapers and rugs for cleaning shoes.... 4

Total .....142

**II. Exterior Equipment:**

Yard neatly fenced, having good gates or stiles 14
Yard clean and attractive..... 14
Trees, flowers, shrubs and walks..... 14
Seats in shade ..... 8
Place to eat lunches: arbor..... 8
As much as four acres of land..... 11
Grounds well drained ..... 11
Playground coated with sod, sand or gravel so as to prevent mud during rain..... 14
School garden ..... 14
Baseball court ..... 8
Tennis court ..... 8
Basketball court ..... 8
Swings, seesaws, horizontal bars, flag-pole and sand pile ..... 11

Total .....143

**III. Buildings:**

Wood, stone, stucco, or brick (wood, 9 points, Stone, stucco or brick, 14 points)..... 14
In good repair (if wood, well painted)..... 11

Attractive ..... 11
Window-panes clean and not broken..... 15
Windows properly grouped..... 15
Main light on left of pupils..... 15
No light in front of pupils..... 15
Clean, well-ventilated cloak-rooms..... 15
Sixteen square feet or more of floor space per child ..... 15
Teacher's home ..... 17

Total ..... .....143

**IV. Interior Equipment:**

Single desks of three sizes (all desks in each row of the same size)..... 12
Teacher's desk and chair..... 11
Clock ..... 7
Twenty-five linear feet of hyloplate blackboard, properly installed, with good chalk rail in each room ..... 12
Dictionaries, maps, globes and charts..... 12
Laboratory: elementary equipment for teaching agriculture, domestic science and manual training ..... 11
Museum: collections of seeds, plants, fossils, etc. 12

Library worth fifty dollars or more in good book-case ..... 11
Good collection of government bulletins..... 10
Auditorium equipped with stage and curtain... 10
Piano or Victrola..... 11
Clean paper on walls or walls properly tinted.. 8
Pot flowers and pictures ..... 8
Gas or electric lights for auditorium..... 8

Total ..... 143

**V. Extension Activities:**

Parent-teacher's association ..... 22
Well executed home project work ..... 17
Young people's reading circle..... 17
Musical organization ..... 17
Literary society ..... 15
Public lectures ..... 15
Boys' and girls' industrial clubs..... 19
School exhibits and community fairs..... 21

Total ..... 143

**VI. Teachers:**

All teachers holding first-grade certificates or certificates of higher grade..... 28

All teachers from state normal schools or first-class colleges ..... 28
No teacher with less than three years of teaching experience ..... 28
All teachers that have been employed in same school for three years or more..... 28
No teacher with more than forty pupils in schools with two or more teachers, and not more than twenty-five pupils in schools with only one teacher ..... 28

Total .....140

**VII. Character and Scope of Work:**

Well-adjusted daily program ..... 13
Open with music..... 13
Following state course of study..... 13
Supplementary readers ..... 13
Classes in agriculture ..... 13
Domestic science in school..... 13
Manual training ..... 13
School term of eight months or more..... 13
Daily attendance of not less than 85 per cent. of all pupils actually enrolled in school..... 13
Plays and games well taught and well supervised 13

| | |
|---|---|
| Attitude of pupils: helpfulness, confidence, co-operation | 14 |
| Total | 144 |

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. In a community that is trying to improve its schools, what would be the effect upon the pupils, patrons and trustees if the principal of the school should make use of a score-card and publish the grades scored by the school at the end of each month? Do you know of a community that is perfectly satisfied with the physical equipment of its schools? Would such a community be satisfied if it were fully conscious of how it compares with some of its more enterprising neighbors?

2. Would it be well for a county superintendent to score every school he visits and leave duplicate copies of the scores made with the trustees and teachers?

## CHAPTER XV

### Larger School Units in the Country

1. **The One-Teacher School.**—We have the one-teacher school. It has been a necessity. It always will be. There are three conditions justifying its existence: (1) sparsely settled communities, (2) isolated districts in river bends and enclosed mountain valleys, (3) districts having central high schools with small schools for little children of the lower grades. The small school is not necessarily a poor school. But under conditions other than those mentioned, the small school has long since outlived its greatest usefulness.

2. **The Poor Attendance in Small Country Schools.**—The commonest of all the objections against consolidation is that it removes schools so far from some homes that not all the children of school age can attend. At first thought, this appears to be a valid reason, but upon investigation it does not prove so. The facts are quite to the contrary. Consolidation tends to improve attendance. Four years ago it was found in one hundred cases of consolidation in nineteen Texas counties that ninety-

seven per cent. showed an increase in attendance, and seventy-seven per cent. reported better teaching. The New Dixon Consolidated School in Collin County, as I found it, while conducting a rural school survey there in 1914, is a good example. It was formed by the union of Old Dixon with the Hopewell School and two-thirds of the Richards District. The average daily attendance of all the pupils enrolled in these three one-room schools the year before the consolidation was forty-five and six-tenths per cent. The average daily attendance of the pupils enrolled in the new consolidated school the next year was sixty-five and six-tenths per cent. It has been my observation that pupils do not mind a reasonably long distance if there is an attractive school at the other end of the road.

3. **The Cost of Small Schools.**—In Collin County I found from the teachers' annual reports that the per capita cost on daily attendance for twenty-six one-room country schools was thirty-one and two-tenths per cent. higher than the per capita cost on daily attendance for McKinney, the county-seat town. This difference in cost was due to the difference in attendance. The smaller the daily attendance, the greater the per capita cost

for those who do attend. But this wastefulness of finance, which is a quantitative thing that can be easily measured, is possibly not so great as the waste of brain power, which can not be measured. There is a great educational waste as well as a great financial waste in the poorly attended, poorly taught, small school.

Advocates of consolidation sometimes hazard the statement that consolidation reduces the total cost of school maintenance. That is not necessarily true, though it does usually reduce the daily cost per pupil through increased attendance. Its economy does not lie in the expenditure of less money. It lies in the expenditure of more money to better advantage. It gives more for each dollar invested.

4. **The Meaning of Consolidation.**—Consolidation brings to pupils the inspiration that increased numbers give. It widens acquaintanceship, stimulates competition, develops school loyalty, encourages interscholastic rivalry and makes way for such school and community activities as organized athletics, debating teams, dramatic clubs and the like. It enjoys better trained teachers, better equipment, longer class periods and fewer grades to the teacher than are possible without consolidation.

Consolidation brings together into one school unit an aggregation of wealth sufficiently large to guarantee adequate school finances. This makes it possible to have better buildings, better libraries and better general equipment.

5. **A Square Deal for the Country Child.**— Country boys and girls have not had as good opportunities as city children. High-school privileges have been denied to most of them. This result has been due to teachers that are immature and not properly trained, to short school terms, to buildings that are poor, insanitary and ill-equipped, to inadequate finances and poor supervision, and to an effort to imitate what town schools are doing.

The twentieth-century country school with more teachers and better equipment is beginning to resent the idea of being a poor example of a town school. It is departing from urban ideals and developing character and individuality of its own. It is standing for more than the mere advancement of children through a graded course. It is not content with dealing only with that portion of education that is locked up in the mysteries of books. Its deepest concern is the enrichment of rural attractions and the preparation of people to live happily and usefully in the midst of rural surroundings.

6. **How to Make a Consolidation.**—Since I began this chapter a woman from DeWitt County called and asked me how I would manage the consolidating of some schools in which she was interested down there. The best that I could do for her, however, was to tell her that I did not know. I have given assistance in effecting many consolidations in Texas, but I have never seen any two cases exactly alike or that could be handled by the same methods. Each case is in a class to itself, requiring the deftest sort of manipulation. For this reason, it is difficult to lay down any very general rules.

Much always depends on how the campaign is launched and who takes the lead in it. One legitimate question always is, Who is the most logical and most acceptable person or group of persons to steer the movement in this community? With the wrong person in the lead, defeat is usually inevitable. The manner of launching a campaign must always be determined by local conditions. The method employed in the case mentioned in the second chapter of this book was, in all probability, the very best one that could have been hit upon for uniting those five small schools. Under other conditions, it might be thoroughly impractical.

Again, I have always found it well to avoid the use of the word "consolidate" as much as possible. In fact, I have never used it in my life in discussing better schools with an audience or with a committee where a case of enlarging a school district was being considered. It is a word that has been overworked, and one that often arouses resentment, whereas the same idea set forth in other terms would be perfectly acceptable. The safest guides for conducting a campaign for the union of two or more school districts into one are judicious common sense, tact, diplomacy and a sound knowledge of human nature.

## THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. State the three reasons justifying the existence of the one-room school.

2. Account for the poor attendance in most of the small country schools. Why does consolidation usually improve attendance?

3. A man once said: "The small, poorly-attended school in the country is the most expensive institution in our educational system." Upon what grounds might this statement be defended? Show that the waste of brain power is the greatest waste sustained by the small, poorly-taught country school. Show that the economy of consolidation does not lie in the expenditure of less money, but in the expenditure of more money to better advantage.

4. State ten advantages the consolidated school has over the one-teacher school.

5. Show that country children have poorer school opportunities than city children. Many country schools are modeled after town schools. They are poor examples of town schools moved to the country. Wherein does the fallacy of this practise lie? Why must the country school have character and individuality of its own in order to meet country needs?

6. Why is it so difficult to lay down a code of rules by which a county superintendent might be guided in the work of rural-school consolidation? Why is it often best not to use the term "consolidate"? Name some types of persons who would be undesirable as local leaders in a school-consolidation movement.

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